



**An exploration of training and support issues  
for those working with children, young people  
and families from Traveller, Irish Traveller,  
Gypsy, Roma and Show People Communities**

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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Thematic summary</b>	<b>i</b>
What the research findings add to previous research	ii
Key themes from the research	iii
Trust-building	iv
The importance of involving the GRT community in developing practice and in training	vi
<b>1. About the study</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Project aims	1
1.3 Impact and outcomes	2
1.4 Research design and methods	2
1.5 About the reporting rationale	7
1.6 Structure of this report	9
<b>PART ONE:</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>GOOD PRACTICE AND RELATED CHALLENGES IN WORKING WITH GRT COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2. Overview of good practice in working with GRT communities</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Good practice in working with GRT communities	14
2.2 Key points	27
<b>3. Challenges in relation to working with GRT communities</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 The main barriers to good practice	30
3.2 Key points	38
<b>PART TWO:</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS, AND IMPACTS IN TRAINING FOR WORKING WITH GRT COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4. Types of learning opportunity, information and support available to staff</b>	<b>42</b>
4.1 Focus of learning opportunities	42
4.2 Types of learning practices	49
4.3 Who delivered the training?	51
4.4 Services and agencies in receipt of support, information and training focusing on GRT communities	53
4.5 Training and the CWDC footprint	54

4.6 Other organisations responsible for the delivery of training, information and support focusing on GRT communities	56
4.7 How training focusing on GRT communities was commissioned	56
4.8 How training focusing on GRT communities was promoted to the workforce	57
4.9 Key points	58
<b>5. Effectiveness of training and support</b>	<b>60</b>
5.1 Barriers and challenges to accessing support, training and information	61
5.2 Factors contributing to successful training and learning opportunities	66
5.3 Key points	75
<b>6. Impacts of training/learning</b>	<b>78</b>
6.1 Overview of impacts of training/learning opportunities focusing on GRT communities	79
6.2 Key points	84
<b>7. Implications</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Authorship list</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Case Studies</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Record of Searches Undertaken</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Appendix 4: The CWDC footprint</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>121</b>

# Thematic summary

## About the study

- **Background.** Recent research has shown the extent of social exclusion among children and young people of Traveller, Irish Traveller, Gypsy, Roma and Showpeople communities, for example in terms of education, health, and accommodation (Derrington and Kendall; Parry et al., 2004; 2004; Niner, 2003). Many mainstream services have little experience of working effectively with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities (Mason and Broughton, 2007). The Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) are drivers of change for these communities. Delivering change requires coordination of services, and sharing by professionals of effective practice, underpinned by appropriate training programmes.
- **The project.** The Children's Workforce Development Council commissioned this project to explore the range of issues around, and approaches to, working with Travellers, Irish Travellers, Gypsies, Roma and Showpeople, as well as the support and training available to staff involved.
- **Methods.** There were two main stages to the study: a literature review (produced in a separate report); and a further investigation of current practice and training (the focus of the main project report and of this thematic summary). The investigative study included: 20 local authority telephone interviews; four interviews with representatives from national organisations who had an overview of training and development in England; and six case-study visits (involving interviews with up to five key people involved in training).

## What the research findings add to previous research

- **Findings confirmed.** Some key findings in the literature review were confirmed in this study. The importance was emphasised for practice of:
  - developing *outreach* work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families
  - adopting a *family-centred* approach
  - ensuring *flexibility* of provision
  - developing effective *partnerships* between providers
  - overcoming strategic challenges of services managing *competing remits* and affording *low priority* to GRT communities
  - considering the capacity implications of the fact that the majority of training continues to be provided by *Traveller Education Support Services professionals*.

The findings from this study on these themes are expanded below.

- **New evidence.** In the following areas, which are summarised below, a new body of evidence was gathered which adds substantially to previous research:
  - strategic direction
  - trust-building
  - involving the GRT community
  - skills, knowledge and attributes to work with GRT families
  - multi-agency practice and training
  - supporting other professionals
  - types of learning opportunity
  - ensuring the quality of training
  - barriers and challenges to accessing training, information and support
  - impacts of training.

## Key themes from the research

### Strategic direction

**Key message.** Developing a more strategic approach should include embedding of policy within wider agendas, which requires more support for local authority services, and greater leadership commitment.

- **A more strategic approach** to developing effective and integrated practice and training needs to be taken. Low prioritisation of GRT issues can lead to a lack of funding, support and strategic leadership, and inconsistent, non-joined up policy across departments. Challenges need addressing of some mainstream services managing competing remits, and perhaps over-relying on specialist services, particularly the Traveller Education Support Services (TESS), to carry out work. Low levels of training undertaken by professionals were partly attributed to the lack of reference to the GRT community in strategic plans, policies and targets, and as a result a lack of resources.
- **Embedding policy.** There is a need for more far-reaching embedding of policy concerning service delivery to GRT communities with the wider equalities and social inclusion agendas, including those for BME communities, and within Children and Young People's Plans, which are key drivers for change.

#### Good practice:

- It is important to provide support for local authority service leaders and managers. Good practice can include:
  - having consultants from national specialist organisations working alongside local authority strategists to develop their strategies and resources
  - having leaders and managers shadowing TESS specialists in their daily work.
- For training to be successful nationally in supporting integrated practice, there should be stronger leadership commitment at local authority and government levels through:
  - publication of practice guidance
  - funding for training and resources provision
  - developing consistency of provision and support across regions.

## Trust-building

**Key message.** A vital task is that of building trusting relations with GRT families. Some services are mistrusted by many GRT families, due to perceptions about the organisational cultures of some services (e.g. their inflexibility), the beliefs and attitudes of some professionals, and the impact of wider values in society. This has good practice implications in terms of outreach work and of partnerships between services and between professionals.

- **Accessing services.** There are concerns that GRT families do not access some services as consistently as other communities because of mistrusting these services. GRT communities may feel that in the past the services concerned have delivered policies concerned with enforcement and control, have proved inflexible, for example with a lack of outreach and engagement, or have failed to protect children and families from discrimination and prejudice. There may have been perceptions of intrusiveness, as pressure to meet targets and solve problems can lead to professionals imposing solutions on GRT families rather than engaging on the basis of equality.
- In the face of such legacies of mistrust, building trusting relations is a major priority.

### **Good practice:**

- *Outreach work* and on-site provision of services have been emphasised for purposes of:
  - helping to make services more accessible, so that GRT children, families and communities obtain the same quality of services as the wider community.
- *Partnership working* in outreach work is essential, for example:
  - professionals with less experience in GRT work initially going out to sites supported by specialists such as TESS staff to help them develop confidence and to earn the trust of GRT families.





## The importance of involving the GRT community in developing practice and in training

**Key message.** The study provides fresh evidence that involving the GRT community in developing and delivering services is essential for good practice.

- **An Advocacy approach.** An advocacy approach to practice involves responding to and supporting the perceived needs and aspirations of community members rather than imposing agendas on them. This approach has been recommended, due to its underlying concern for trust-building, and supporting community members towards greater control over service delivery.

### **Good practice:**

- The involvement of GRT community members is strongly recommended as good practice. Approaches which have been tried and tested include involving GRT community members in:
  - projects that are aimed at development for a local GRT community
  - service development and training of professionals
  - service delivery to client families.
- Including members of GRT communities in training is a key factor for success. Aspects to consider include:
  - Good preparation and support are essential for trainers from GRT communities to know their roles and to develop appropriate skills
  - Members of GRT communities who are employed in teams e.g. TESS teams are also well placed to train other Traveller adults and young people so that they can become involved in training events.

## Knowledge required to work with GRT communities

**Key message.** The study provides evidence of knowledge requirements for good practice, for example knowing about relevant policy, information systems, about different GRT communities, and about individuals' cultural preferences through taking a personalised approach.

- **Links between policy and personal experience.** Knowledge of national, local and organisational policy, and legislation is essential. It is important for professionals to develop:
  - legal and policy knowledge around racism and prejudice
  - self-awareness to examine their own attitudes towards communities.
- **Practical knowledge.** Areas of understanding which are necessary to effective practice include:
  - how to collate, track and analyse data about children from GRT families
  - developing networks for successful partnership work.
- **GRT communities' specific histories.** Many professionals may need to develop their knowledge of the histories and economic circumstances of diverse GRT communities. Information needs for professionals include:
  - awareness of the location and make-up of the different Traveller populations
  - awareness of work and travel patterns and site provision.Particularly valuable is first-hand knowledge from regular contact with GRT families, which can transform negative beliefs and attitudes.
- **Cultural awareness.** Professionals need to focus on identifying and responding to any specific cultural preferences with a direct practical application, through a personalised approach i.e. by engaging with community members individually, rather than by relying on traditional stereotypes of cultural difference.

### Good practice:

- Diversity of GRT groups. The ambience and environment for service delivery need to reflect the diversity of GRT groups, for example by ensuring that:
  - the agencies have materials reflecting the different community cultures
  - professionals and managers develop awareness of the variations of needs and aspirations within different communities
  - professionals and managers take account of factors which may be relevant such as particular community expectations for interaction, and gender issues.

## Skills and attributes required to work with GRT communities

**Key message.** The study provides new, detailed evidence of communication skills needed for working effectively with GRT communities. The study has also provided evidence, in greater depth than in most of the literature, that key attributes which professionals need for effective practice include: ‘openness’, reflectiveness, persistence, and resilience, and the determination to resist unacceptable attitudes and practices.

- **Communication skills.** Effective communication needs to be based on an underlying principle of equality. Key skills which professionals require for effective communication and trust-building involve elements which are needed for all work with children and families. These elements include generating realistic expectations; being respectful; listening, and responding sensitively. It is also important to communicate in a non-judgemental way. In practice, these communication skills have to be applied in very specific ways that depend on professionals’ social and cultural knowledge of GRT families and communities.
- **Resisting and challenging unacceptable attitudes and practice.** TESS staff sometimes felt that the attitudes and beliefs of some other professionals had a detrimental impact on their own practice. The prejudiced attitudes of wider society inform professionals’ viewpoints and practices without them necessarily being aware of this. Managers and professionals need to be able to take a consistent stance by:
  - resisting and challenging stereotypes and racism when they appear among other professionals.

### Good practice:

- Openness, empathy, reflectiveness, and resilience. Professional attributes which have been described as important to good practice include:
  - *‘openness’*, being receptive, related to the skill of suspending judgement on issues even where there is conflict and heat
  - *empathy and reflectiveness*, having the ability to be mindful about one’s own practice and to learn from this, for example where there might be unintended discrimination
  - *balance and objectivity*, holding a balanced and objective view, and resisting emotional over-involvement
  - *resilience*, persisting despite setbacks or initially discouraging responses to initiatives
  - More effective practice can result from training and guidance which supports practitioners to be open-minded and so to build relationships with GRT family members more successfully.

## Multi-agency practice and training

**Key message.** Multi-agency training provides significant opportunities for learning, while informal learning opportunities have also been created and supported around joint working. The majority of training in this field is currently provided by *Traveller Education Support Service (TESS)* professionals. TESS professionals have developed new partnerships with GRT community members and professionals from other services, to develop learning opportunities for a wider range of professional groups.

- **Multi-agency partnerships.** Multi-agency work is vital to good practice. The multi-agency partnership is likely to involve relationships between professionals with quite sharply different service remits. There needs to be:
  - partnership working agreements at different levels
  - clear lines of recourse in case of problems of implementation.
- **Integrated frontline working.** Newly developing structures for integrated services for children, such as locality-based multi-agency teams, have been helpful for development of early intervention and improved information sharing. However, TESS specialists and some other relevant services are not always directly involved with those teams.

### Good practice:

- **Leading role.** A large part of a specialist's (e.g. TESS staff) role might be as a named lead contact 'facilitating and directing' other professionals to work effectively.
  - There is recognised need for other services to take on greater ownership of work with GRT communities, with recent examples of health visitors and children's centre workers conducting more concentrated outreach work.
  - Some dedicated work such as that which has been done by the TESS is still needed.
- **Expertise.** Successful frontline multi-agency working with GRT communities to be successful requires
  - high levels of professional expertise in the different services
  - a named person for professionals to work with in different services
- **Multi-agency training.** Training on a multi-agency basis has supported participants to learn more about each others' work and appreciate the impact their work has on other agencies. Training has usefully been structured around developing procedures for professionals from different agencies working together. Multi-agency forums and events have also supported informal learning in areas such as:
  - understanding roles
  - building knowledge of families and communities
  - breaking down misconceptions
  - developing good practice by learning from each others' experiences.

## Training: Other types of learning opportunity

**Key message.** This project has identified and explored a continuum of training whereas the existing literature mainly provides descriptions of formal training. This continuum includes: formal events, more open sessions, and informal learning opportunities. Professionals can support each other in their daily work through sharing good practice.

- **Varied approaches.** All the authorities and training providers use a combination of formal and informal practices when delivering their training.
- **Focus.** The general themes that have been covered in GRT training by local authorities and training providers include: contextual information, the GRT community's own perspective, training tailored to specific services, practical advice, and multi-agency work.
- **Community perspective.** A substantial proportion of all training has included some aspects that covered the GRT community's own perspective on their culture, lifestyle and other issues. In the majority of cases this type of training was provided by including members of the GRT community in the delivery
- **Informal approaches.** On the whole, informal techniques for delivering training have been favoured. This could be achieved through:
  - relaxed, open training sessions
  - outside of organised training sessions during work shadowing, outreach work, and other joint activities which might create opportunities for informal learning
- **Sharing practice.** Different ways in which managers and professionals can be supported by working with other colleagues with particular expertise in areas of daily practice were suggested, including:
  - *joint planning* of work processes, for example outreach
  - *strategy review*, for example partnership working strategies
  - *partnership work with clients*, for example providing guidance on conducting assessments and review
  - *developing resources together*, for example supporting professionals to develop materials such as an early years book.
- **Professionals receiving training.** The most commonly reported recipients of training were school staff. There were also professionals from a wide range of sectors in attendance, including: health, housing, police, Connexions, voluntary sector, early years, children's centres and education welfare.
- **Options available.** There were only a small number of providers reported to be delivering GRT-focused training, with TESS trainers being the main providers. National training was expensive and as a result not widely available to the majority of the workforce. Some TESSs may not have the necessary capacity to deliver training to the extent that is required.
- **Need for more systematic provision.** The lack of a coherent system for the organisation and delivery of training means that the training is at times 'ad hoc'.

**Good practice: ensuring the quality of training**

- **Preparation** of trainers and the focus and quality of training are key aspects of success.
- **Standards.** A key factor in success is ensuring that the training is of a high standard in terms of pedagogy, well-planned with consultation, and delivered in a carefully structured, sequenced and interactive manner.
- **Needs of participants.** Important factors in successful training are:
  - identifying the needs and expectations of participants in advance.
  - linking the training context to practice e.g. across a series of sessions.
- **Approach.** A training approach which focuses on attitudes, awareness and practice can support practitioners to build professional relationships with GRT family members more successfully
- **Guidance.** If training is intended to be implemented informally through partnership work, the staff need to be made aware that the work offers an informal training experience and provided with guidance and support.
- **Reflection.** Providing opportunities for participants to reflect on their experiences is an important factor in effective training. If training is intended to be implemented through informal partnership work, time needs to be built in to reflect and learn from these experiences, for example through subsequent formal training.

## Constraints in accessing training, support, and information

**Key message.** This project has extended the evidence base by showing that constraints include: the limited nature of opportunity for training, funding issues, time, and need for support following training.

- **Availability.** A key barrier preventing professionals accessing training has been the limited availability of training focussing on GRT communities, and in particular on Eastern European Roma migrants.
- **Support.** Provision of follow up support for staff following participation in a formal training event was especially limited.
- **Inclusion.** Gypsy/Traveller issues were not included in much of the wider anti racism or diversity training delivered to professionals.
- **Priorities.** Low prioritisation among some professionals for GRT-focused training has led to low take-up.
- **Time.** There are time constraints for managers and professionals wishing to access training, and for professionals (for example within TESS) wishing to deliver training in addition to their core duties and responsibilities.

## Impacts of training

**Key message.** Training can impact effectively on professionals' knowledge and their professional practice, and on members of the GRT community who were involved in training.

- **Knowledge.** Impacts of training for participants have included:
  - increased knowledge, and understanding of GRT communities and their needs
  - increased awareness of support services and local procedures.
- **Attitudes.** Professionals' learning experiences led to a change in their own perceptions of GRT communities.
- **Practice.** Professionals reported changes in practice, including:
  - the development of culturally appropriate resources
  - more appropriate interactions with community members.
- **Community trainers.** Members of the GRT community who completed training to enable them to effectively deliver GRT-related training to professionals reported:
  - increased confidence in relation to their capacity to deliver training,
  - increased self-esteem and positivity about their own capabilities. This also had potential benefits for GRT communities for example that members felt more equal, accepted and valued.



## Overarching issues: Policy and Practice in training and support for those working with GRT communities

- **Partnerships.** TESSs have developed good practice in training but there is now a need for more equal sharing of responsibility. A partnership approach with other professionals in the joint planning and delivery of training could be pursued in order to share out good practice.
- **Multi-agency approaches.** Multi-agency meetings could specifically include within their terms of reference the requirement to discuss and collectively address professionals' training needs for working with GRT communities at the local level. This could help to address the current ad hoc nature of training and could include:
  - jointly published training materials
  - planning of local (and less expensive) conference events
  - job shadowing initiatives, work placements etc.
- **Reach of training.** Training provision could be further extended in order to capture a wider range of services.
- **Trainers from GRT communities.** With effective levels of support and training for the GRT trainers themselves, involving GRT community members as trainers can:
  - facilitate open and meaningful dialogue
  - more effectively dispel deep-seated stereotyped beliefs than if delivered by non-Travellers.
  - support GRT community members in feeling accepted and valued
- **Recruitment.** More GRT trainers could be recruited (and accredited) across a wider range of services. This could include formal modes of delivery and more informal interpretations of training.
- **Resources.** DVD resources featuring the community voice could be held centrally for all services to access. Development of cultural resources is a learning impact.
- **Historical knowledge.** Awareness about the historical treatment of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in policy and practice helps to place current issues in context and therefore encourages a deeper understanding of the predicament these communities may face.
- **Training can recognise and promote the diversity of Traveller communities.** Including training as part of a wider diversity agenda goes some way in recognising this. Professionals with responsibility for induction and/or diversity training in all services should ensure that GRT community issues are included and embedded – this should help to reach a wider target audience.
- **Universality.** Trainers may need to consider drawing greater attention to similarities and universality of human need including psychological factors such as self respect, the need for safety and a desire for social acceptance.
- **Attitudes and values.** Training can usefully include a focus on attitudes and values as these drive even the most subtle forms of professionals' behaviour.

# 1. About the study

## 1.1 Introduction

The Children's Workforce Development Council commissioned this project to explore training and support issues for those working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities.<sup>1</sup> Recent research has detailed the extent of risk, marginalisation and social exclusion among children and young people of Traveller, Irish Traveller, Gypsy, Roma and Showpeople communities. For example, there is a greater incidence of ill-health among Gypsies and Irish Travellers than in any other ethnic group in the UK, and poor service take-up (Parry *et al.*, 2004). Many mainstream services have little experience of working effectively with mobile communities, their work being tailored to those living sedentary lives (Mason and Broughton, 2007).<sup>2</sup> In education services, despite significant progress, issues of access, attendance and attainment remain a matter of concern, especially for secondary age students (Ofsted, 2003; Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Accommodation options for Gypsies and Travellers have been widely recognised as inadequate (Niner, 2003). Professionals may not always identify the children, young people and families with whom they work as being from GRT communities due to issues relating to the ascription of their ethnicity, and therefore service delivery may not be appropriately targeted (DCSF, 2008). The Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) are drivers of change for these communities which require coordination of services, and sharing of effective practice, underpinned by appropriate training programmes.

These issues have implications for a wide range of services and agencies working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, families and communities. The project is intended to contribute to the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)'s ability to support and develop the children's workforce.

## 1.2 Project aims

The main aim of the project was to conduct a literature review and a further case study investigation of the range of issues around and approaches to working with Travellers, Irish Travellers, Gypsies, Roma and Showpeople, and the support, training and other programmes available to staff involved. The scope of the study reflects the

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<sup>1</sup> The Children's Workforce Development Council brief refers to working with Travellers, Irish Travellers, Gypsies, Roma and Showpeople.

<sup>2</sup> It is recognised that not all GRT communities lead a mobile lifestyle. (ODPM, 2004)

wide range of services working with children and families, although, as is detailed in section 1.4, education services were found to play a lead, or central, role in the development of initiatives and therefore feature prominently in this report.

The project aimed to address the following broad questions.

- What are the main findings on existing best practice in support, training and provision of information in relation to the groups examined?
- What gaps in support, training and information exist for those working with children, young people and families?
- What needs to be put in place to support those working with these groups through training, information provision and support?

### **1.3 Impact and outcomes**

The project aimed to produce a report on the most relevant evidence of good practice in provision of services to Travellers, Irish Travellers, Gypsies, Roma and Showpeople, with evidence of what works, particularly in relation to information, training and support requirements and provision. The report is accompanied by an annotated bibliography which will relay a range of issues and approaches to working with Travellers, Irish Travellers, Gypsies, Roma and Showpeople. The project is intended to contribute to the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)'s ability to support and develop the children's workforce. Findings from the project will be disseminated by a range of means including an online report.

### **1.4 Research design and methods**

The research design overall comprised two main stages:

- A review of the literature and research was undertaken. A range of relevant databases were searched through NFER's dedicated Library service, and a call for local authority material was undertaken by EMIE at NFER. More detailed analysis was conducted of reports and similar materials.
- Examples of practice were followed up. The main areas of interest in identifying best practice were examined in two further strands. There were telephone interviews with key contacts from 20 initiatives and case studies were arranged examining six of these in greater depth.

### Literature review (sample details)

A search of ten databases was conducted using key words relating to service type and levels of use, community group and core skills and knowledge areas. Search results for the period 2000 to 2008 yielded 188 sources in total (see Appendix 1). However, when the information provided in the searches (in some cases only the title and in others, a short abstract) was examined it was evident that only 36 of these 188 sources related closely to the research aims of this study. In addition, a small number of relevant articles and grey literature were identified for detailed analysis by the project consultant and through the call for local authority material undertaken by EMIE at NFER. The EMIE call led to documents being received from 40 local authorities, the majority of which were relatively brief descriptions of current practice.

Hard copies of 36 sources were obtained through the library search and were examined by the research team. They were graded in the following ways in terms of their relevance to the research questions:

- Highly relevant (6)
- High/medium relevance (12)
- Medium relevance (5)
- Medium/low relevance (6)
- Low relevance (7).

Of these, the 'highly relevant' sources and those of 'high/medium relevance' were selected for review. Each of the documents were categorised by the sector they covered as well as core skills and knowledge areas for children's workforce development, and the GRT community which was focused on. In many cases, however, the descriptions of the GRT community were generic rather than specific which raised some problems of categorisation.

The following sectors were covered by the literature:

- Education
- Health (including mental health and drugs work)
- Social work
- Accommodation / Housing
- Voluntary sector
- Early years

- Probation
- Police
- Leisure.

### **Criteria for selection of telephone interviews**

Telephone interviews were selected by applying the following criteria:

1. Differences of location (i.e. urban and rural). This allowed the research team to take account of: different patterns of settlement and of mobility among the groups (including those settled in houses and those on permanent sites, as well as highly mobile groups).
2. A range of different professional groups receiving training, taking particular account of the CWDC footprint.
3. Different possible sources of training, e.g. Traveller Education Support Service (TESS); Local Authority trainers.
4. A full range of core skills and knowledge areas was covered through the training.
5. Different groups targeted in service delivery: e.g. Gypsies; Travellers (including Irish); Roma; Showpeople
6. Telephone interview respondents were selected to explore key themes identified as highly relevant from the literature review.

### **Methodology for telephone interviews**

A total of 20 telephone interviews was conducted. An initial selection of 11 local authorities was made from the 20 local authorities who responded to the EMIE email both by offering to participate and by sending the research team documents detailing their current work. The documentation varied greatly in detail and scope, but primarily consisted of brief descriptions of current or recent initiatives, which indicated that training is offered to a wide range of professional groups, but seemingly in a largely ad-hoc rather than systematic manner, and with much local variation. These professional groups apparently included those who work specifically with children and families (e.g. youth workers; early years practitioners; teachers; learning support assistants; foster care service staff); and those who deliver universal services for adults and children (e.g. police; housing and health staff). The key areas offering potential opportunities for learning which were described or listed in the documents included a variety of training initiatives, approaches to multi-agency working, and information sharing initiatives.

The selection of local authorities to approach for telephone interviews was based on the criteria as shown above. The contact person who sent the email offering to participate was approached initially. S/he was asked about specific initiatives which were referred to in the documents, and requested to refer the research team on to a lead contact for that initiative. The aim was to interview one or two key people involved in each initiative from within an authority. The intention was (through snowballing in a focused way from the first contact) to include local authority trainers in the sample i.e. those delivering training to different services in the specific local authorities, as well as experienced professionals within the CWDC footprint who may have received training. Sixteen interviews were held with personnel concerned with specific initiatives within 11 local authorities.

The inclusion of interviews with members of the TESS in all the 11 local authorities, and their strong representation through this report, reflects their historical importance as the professional grouping most involved in work specifically targeted at GRT children and their families, perhaps most trusted by GRT communities on the basis of their understanding of and respectful attitudes towards GRT cultures, and most likely to be offering training to other professionals for this area of work.

Unlike other services such as social services, environmental health, education welfare, and the police whose remit with GRT communities may involve managing highly contentious issues such as eviction and the enforcement of legal duties, the TESS has generally been seen by GRT communities as trustworthy and retaining a focus on the needs of the child. From the early 1980s, in recognition that proactive policies were needed to encourage Traveller families to access education, charitable organisations and some Local Education Authorities (LEAs as were) began to develop specialist educational provision for Gypsy and Traveller children (Danaher et al, 2007). In 1990, the Government introduced a specific grant aimed at ensuring unhindered access to, and full integration of Traveller children in mainstream schools and in response, a network of TESS's gradually developed throughout the UK (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). More recently, additional financial support for Gypsy and Traveller pupils has come from targeted mainstream sources such as the Vulnerable Children's Grant. The focus and nature of Traveller education support has changed considerably therefore over the past twenty years from teaching Traveller children at the roadside or in separate mobile schools to supporting children in mainstream classrooms, and since the Children Act 2004, and Every Child Matters (ECM), greater emphasis has been placed on advisory work and training not only for teachers in school but also for colleagues in other agencies and the emerging Children's Services

Teams. This changing historical context informs major themes within the present study, particularly the consideration of the present and future place of the TESS in relation to children's services, integrated multi-agency working, and provision of learning opportunity.

In addition, four more interviewees were recruited from national organisations with an overview of training and development in England. Key figures within these organisations with extensive experience of working with the Traveller network were approached to provide an overview of their training experience. Telephone interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour and were recorded. Summaries were made of the interview recordings using a summary template, and the information in the templates formed the basis for thematic analysis. Principles of informed consent were adhered to and confidentiality agreements were maintained through the study. The findings reported in both Part A and Part B of the report draw on the analysis of the telephone interviews (see section 1.5 below).

### **Methodology for case-study visits**

The selection of six case studies for visits was based on analysis of the telephone interviews, and re-analysis of the documents which were sent through the call for local authority material undertaken by EMIE at NFER.

The telephone interviews with 20 respondents provided a wealth of information about current good practice and the range of learning, information and support in specific settings. The focus of case-study visits was to acquire more in-depth perspectives on specific initiatives which appear to have been successful, and which should be of interest to a wider audience, with a focus on training or opportunities for learning which had taken place.

The case studies were particularly intended to explore and illustrate a considerable diversity of types of initiatives, targeting a range of different professionals, and taking account of the continuum between formal training and informal learning opportunity which was indicated through the telephone interviews. The visits were used to obtain a range of viewpoints on types of learning opportunity, information and support available to staff, and aspects of the effectiveness of training and support in the initiatives, including factors underpinning successful provision, and the impacts of provision. Case-study visits included four or five interviews, typically lasting between 40-60 minutes, and the aim was to interview, where possible, key personnel involved

in the organisation and delivery of training or of formal or informal learning events, recipients, and GRT community members.

The case studies were selected on the basis of several factors, drawing on the thematic analysis of the telephone interviews. The telephone interviews provided information on the background, local histories and ethnicity of the GRT groups and the interviewees, the main issues and challenges in working with GRT communities, important attributes for effective practice with GRT families, and experiences of training, support and information provision in relation to this work. Drawing on this information, key factors underpinning selection of cases comprised:

- **Locality:** the variety of settings to reflect regional differences (e.g. between needs in urban and rural areas).
- **Focus of learning:** ensuring that each of the case studies represented a specific focus, including equalities work, effective communication and cultural awareness, local context and histories, provision and exchange of information and support for effective partnership work.
- **Learning type:** variety of learning opportunity across the six case studies to include: formal training; informal learning opportunity through shared working practice.
- **Footprint:** involvement of a range of different professional groups in learning opportunities across the six case studies, including key groups in the CWDC footprint.
- **GRT group involvement:** seeking to examine a range of ways in which GRT groups might be involved in learning opportunities; and might benefit from them.

Applying these criteria, six case studies were selected. Details of these case studies are provided in Appendix 2, while the findings on learning opportunities reported in Part B of the report draw on both the telephone interviews and the case studies (see section 1.5 below for an explanation of how each phase of data collection and analysis informed the report structure).

## 1.5 About the reporting rationale

Following this introduction, the main report presents project findings in three parts. Part 1 (chapters 2-3) highlights good practice and related challenges in working with members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities. Part 2 (chapters 4-6) reports on learning opportunities for working with GRT communities and challenges success factors and impacts in the provision of training. A separate report consists of



the literature review, and key findings from this literature review are summarised in each chapter, along with additionality provided by this study.

The rationale for presenting the report in this order is as follows. The information on good practice and related challenges in Part 1 provides the basis for the subsequent exploration of learning opportunities in Part 2 in two ways. First, an understanding of requirements for effective practice underpins considerations about the delivery of formal training. Second, the consideration of effective practice and associated challenges highlights important areas, such as multi-agency work, and involvement of GRT community members in service delivery which, the evidence suggests, also potentially provide opportunities for informal learning. However, the issues concerning effective practice are not always the same as those for learning and support for learning, and therefore they are presented in separate but interlinked parts of the report. For example, although multi-agency forums can facilitate effective case-working and decision-making on joined-up practice between professionals, this may not be recognised and supported as a relevant aspect of ongoing training or learning opportunity. To retain clarity about the distinction between practice and learning opportunity, the report therefore separates out its overview of effective practice from the accounts of training and specifically acknowledged learning opportunities for enhancing practice. However, cross-references are made to thematic links as they arise.

The sequencing of this final output of the project also reflects the direction and channelling of methodological focus in the research. The initial literature review (NFER, 2008) illustrated a strong evidence-base on analysing the challenges and barriers to good practice, but with far less robust evidence of training initiatives. The summary findings from the literature review at the start of each of chapters 2-6 in this report to some extent reflect a historical lack of focus regarding any systematic workforce development for working with GRT communities. The telephone interviews focused on gathering new evidence both of practice which has proved successful and on training issues. (These interviews were mostly with local authority training providers, from TESS, and some national training providers, who had for historical reasons, explained in section 1.4 above, delivered more training to education professionals than any other group, although they had also delivered some training to a wide variety of other groups.) Evidence from these interviews provided the core information for Part 1 of the report, highlighting good practice, and contributed to important themes concerning training, information and support in Part 2. These interviews were also used to identify particular examples of innovative

training which had recently been delivered to a range of different professional groups, for more intensive follow-up through case study visits. The case study evidence from these visits is used, alongside the evidence from the telephone interviews, to inform Part 2 of the report. In particular the case studies seek to emphasise the diversity of learning opportunity. They focus on factors contributing to effectiveness, while taking account of the degree of formality or informality of such training and learning opportunity, and the different services and professionals involved.

## 1.6 Structure of this report

As noted, Part 1 presents the findings on good practice in working with GRT communities:

- Chapter 2 presents an overview of good practice in working with GRT communities – this chapter highlights:
  - the importance of involving the GRT community in developing practice
  - the importance of outreach work
  - skills, knowledge and attributes required to work with GRT communities
  - training support and information needs for good practice
  - multi-agency practice
  - supporting teachers and other professionals
  - strategic priorities around sharing of good practice
  - supporting different LA services working with GRT communities.
  
- Chapter 3 focuses on challenges in relation to achieving good practice in working with GRT communities – this chapter highlights:
  - challenges around service inflexibility
  - continuity of service provision
  - the impact on services of wider societal values
  - service capacity and competing priorities
  - professionals' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes,
  - access and inclusion, and the views and attitudes of GRT communities.

Part 2 presents the findings on the nature and scope of existing learning opportunities, as well as challenges and success factors in terms of training, for working with GRT communities:

- Chapter 4 identifies the learning opportunities, information and support available to staff. General themes which are discussed include:

- the focus of learning opportunities
  - the types of learning practices
  - who delivers the training
  - the services and agencies in receipt of GRT-related training/support
  - other organisations responsible for the delivery of GRT-related training/support
  - how training was commissioned; and how it was promoted to the workforce.
- Chapter 5 considers the effectiveness of training and support. Key themes are discussed concerning challenges to accessing support, training and information. These themes include:
    - limited availability of training
    - low prioritisation of training focusing on GRT communities amongst the workforce
    - a lack of funding for training
    - a lack of time for professionals to attend training events.

The chapter concludes by summarising the factors that contribute to successful training and opportunities for learning, including:

- involving GRT community members in training
  - ensuring the quality of training
  - focusing on attitudes, awareness and practice
  - creating opportunities for reflection
  - taking account of the importance of multi-agency work;
  - ensuring strategic support from local authorities.
- Chapter 6 provides an overview of the impacts resulting from participation in training/learning focusing on GRT communities. The chapter draws on the views of interviewees in each of the six case studies. (These case studies are presented in Appendix after the main report as summaries exemplifying interviewees' accounts of training and learning opportunities/activities in the six authorities.)
  - Chapter 7 then concludes the report by drawing out the implications from the above chapters for policy and practice.

Throughout the report, in line with confidentiality agreements which were included in the informed consent procedures prior to interviews, the anonymity of respondents is preserved, by noting only the current work location – in an LA or in a national

organisation (i.e. a national voluntary sector organisation providing training, or a national professional organisation providing training).

## **PART ONE:**

### **GOOD PRACTICE AND RELATED CHALLENGES IN WORKING WITH GRT COMMUNITIES**

**Part 1 of the report highlights good practice and related challenges in working with members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities.**

**Chapter 2 provides an overview of key aspects of this good practice, such as involving the GRT community; outreach work; skills, knowledge and attributes required; multi-agency work; supporting teachers and other professionals; sharing of good practice, and supporting different LA services.**

**Chapter 3 looks at the challenges related to working with GRT communities, for example, around service inflexibility; continuity of provision; the impact on services of wider societal values; strategic-level priorities; professionals' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes; access and inclusion; and the views and attitudes of GRT communities.**

## 2. Overview of good practice in working with GRT communities

### What the literature says

#### Understanding GRT communities

- The importance was stressed of professionals understanding the work patterns and aspirations of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (Papadopolous and Lay, 2007).
- It is reported in studies drawing on interviews with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities would like professionals to be more flexible in meeting their requirements (Treise and Shepherd, 2006). Histories of enforced movement with little notice and past legacies of inflexibility have contributed to this aspiration. Outreach is considered very important (Donnelly, 2003).
- Families' accounts of patterns of travelling were analysed to reveal a continuum of predictability in relation to travelling, from relatively predictable (e.g. re: Showpeople) to hurriedly made decisions to move on, not always by choice. It is important for professionals to understand families' reasons for travel in order to provide better support (Padfield, 2006).
- It is important for professionals to understand GRT communities' views of learning and of health so as to tailor their service delivery more effectively. For example, 'learning' was considered different from going to school (Padfield, 2006).

#### Professional practice

- The importance of a family-centred approach is emphasised (Bhopal, 2004; Riches, 2007; Mason *et al*, 2006). Approaches to working with families may differ according to the remit of the agency and professional involved.
- The working relationship and the division of responsibilities between specialists and generalist professionals needs clarifying to ensure that it fits with equality agendas concerning 'mainstreaming' i.e. the systematic consideration of the effects of all policies and practices on disadvantaged groups. For example, some schools over-rely on specialist TESS professionals to liaise with and build partnerships with Traveller families rather than take on such responsibilities themselves (Derrington, 2005).
- Key specialist professional roles, e.g. the Traveller Liaison Officer role, have the potential to provide opportunities for trust-building which other professionals need to draw on (Warrington and Peck, 2005).
- The importance of achieving a successful balance between communicating with clarity of purpose about remits and responsibilities and showing flexibility and awareness of Gypsies' and Travellers' lifestyles was emphasised (Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Treise and Shepherd, 2006; Morran, 2001).

#### Strategic awareness

- Partnerships between service providers – co-located partnerships or partnerships between outreach specialists and generalists (e.g. between TESS professionals and teachers) are far more effective in developing practice than

specialists working in greater isolation (Nacif, 2005).

- The importance was emphasised of partnerships between community and providers which involve the strategic promotion of community development rather than only improving existing services. Community development can be supported at different levels:
  - Operational level: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members can work alongside professionals to develop/deliver services and/or training and this can increase their own skills (Coxhead, 2004; Scottish Executive, 2003; Warrington and Peck, 2005; Riches, 2007).
  - Strategic level: Service partnerships can be tailored to focus on community development / capacity building objectives (capacity building includes human resource development re: skills and understandings, and community organisational development) (Mason and Broughton, 2007; Diacon *et al*, 2007; McNeill *et al*. 2005).
  - There is a need for training programmes to support sustainable development of community capacity.
- The main key themes in the literature review were supported with new evidence in this study. For example the importance of *outreach work*, of adopting a *family-centred* approach, and of *flexibility* was emphasised (section 2.1.2 and 2.1.5), and of developing effective operational and strategic partnerships between providers (section 2.1.6 and 2.1.8) was strongly highlighted.
- The existing literature stops short of exploring in fine detail the attributes, skills and knowledge required for professionals to work effectively with GRT communities.
- This chapter provides new, detailed evidence of key processes e.g. those required to engage and communicate effectively with GRT communities, of key *knowledge* requirements, for example around policy, about information systems, and about different GRT communities, and of key *attributes*, including qualities such as 'openness', reflectiveness, persistence, and resilience (sections 2.1.3-2.1.5).
- The chapter highlights the importance of *involving the GRT community* in developing practice (section 2.1.1).
- The chapter also highlights the strategic importance of *embedding of policy* concerning service delivery to GRT communities by such means as local authority targets and practice (section 2.1.9)

## 2.1 Good practice in working with GRT communities

Drawing on the 20 telephone interviews to provide an overview, interviewees' views on what constitutes good practice in working with children, young people and families from GRT communities focused on the following key themes (which are then examined in the sub-sections that follow):

- the importance of involving the GRT community in developing practice
- the importance of outreach work

- skills required to work with GRT communities
- knowledge required to work with GRT communities
- attributes required to work with GRT communities
- multi-agency practice
- supporting other professionals and sharing good practice
- strategic support for LA services
- strategic integration of practice with wider policy agencies.

### 2.1.1 Involving the GRT community

The importance for good practice of involving GRT communities in service development and delivery was stressed by several respondents from local authorities and national voluntary sector organisations. Some approaches were described that highlight whole community development, while others involve contribution to service development, and a third strand concerns service delivery to client families.

One approach to involving community members concerns development projects that aspire to engage GRT participants in achieving goals that are important to the community, for example improving their environment. One project was described by a TESS coordinator that involved parents and children creatively in decorating their site boundary; this was said to be successful because it brought the whole community together in a context where it is difficult for services to engage with parents. It was also said that projects which involve parents as well as children in developing skills and applying these skills in productive ways towards community development, can be important for raising community self-esteem.

Another dimension of good practice that goes beyond case work with individual families involves community members' participation in events which should impact on service development and delivery. Recent engagement projects with National Association of Teachers of Travellers (NATT) involvement have included:

- involving communities in the Gypsy Roma Travellers History Month<sup>3</sup>
- visiting a new site to ask the parents and children what resources they would like to see in the local school
- running a project in a local school with a local Roma support group, bringing in community members, a local female football player, dancers, and storytellers.

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<sup>3</sup> The first ever GRT History Month in June 2008.



Another aspect of co-participation in service delivery and development which was mentioned as good practice involves employing GRT community members and involving them in service delivery and in training events. Involvement of community members in training was particularly recommended by both voluntary organisations and local authority respondents. According to one respondent from a national voluntary sector organisation, it was important to recruit community workers, and have them make presentations at training sessions. An example of community workers being employed to deliver services concerns a bus service that goes out to sites to run homework clubs supporting children with school work. The voluntary organisation leading this project pays Travellers to participate in this family-focused project.

Concerning service delivery, the advocacy model involves responding to and supporting the agendas of community members rather than imposing agendas on them. One national voluntary sector organisation adopts an advocacy model of engaging with GRT families, led by Traveller women, which is felt by the organisation to be good practice. For example, if GRT families approach the organisation for help with passport issues, that is where the initial focus of the organisation's work with the family will lie, even if the service provider feels that there are other issues of concern for any family member's well-being which need to be addressed. In this case, the service provider strives to support the community members to retain control over the relationship. One purpose of this approach is to build trust, so that further along the line community members will also raise a wider range of concerns.

*Gypsies and Travellers bring their issues to the services and it may be their children are not in school or there may be mental health problems etc but the issue they want you to sort out is their new passport so you do that and you don't try to tackle any other issues unless they ask. Advocacy involves giving them the information for their new passport in the hope that they will bring their other issues to you once you have established their trust.*

A national voluntary sector respondent

The advocacy model may be easier for voluntary sector organisations to apply consistently than statutory sector organisations which have constraining remits, but the underlying concern for trust-building and supporting community members towards greater control over service delivery seems to have wide relevance. Good practice involves being proactive but also flexible. For example, whilst an outreach approach is widely recommended, this needs to be done in a sensitive way, respecting the fact that intrusiveness can be resented.

*sometimes we have found that the outreach approach works best but at the same time recognising that you are going into people's homes and you have to respect that, it is not always about what is convenient for you.*

A local authority respondent

The involvement of members of GRT communities in training professionals was also viewed as a key factor for successful training, and raises specific issues which are discussed in detail in section 5.2.1.

### **2.1.2 Outreach work**

The importance of outreach work and on-site provision of services was emphasised as a means of overcoming legacies of mistrust and inaccessible or inflexible services. The status of outreach work needs to be raised to the same level as work on service sites according to one voluntary sector respondent.

The point was also made that outreach work should be developed in a strategic context which ensures that GRT children, families and communities obtain the same quality of services as the wider community. Outreach is not intended to remain a poor substitute for other better resourced services but a means of promoting equitable access to those services:

*In the past, you find Travellers have received watered-down second rate services through all good intentions sent out to them in the community, rather than the other way round getting Travellers to come into the town and use the mainstream facilities be it hospitals, GP surgeries or schools.*

A local authority respondent

There are therefore important strategic considerations around the place of outreach in the context of the wider spectrum of service provision to different GRT communities. However, outreach work is clearly vital in many settings to achieve initial engagement and develop trust with families who would not otherwise access services.

### **2.1.3 Skills required for working with the GRT community**

From the descriptions which respondents gave of skills which are important for good practice, it is clear that many are communication skills which can be described as being generic to work with children and families. However, to make good use of these

skills, practitioners need to draw on a knowledge base and awareness which may be specific to work with GRT communities.

An underlying consideration is the extent to which good practice with GRT communities is comparable to good practice with wider communities. Good practice involves working towards social inclusion with GRT children in the same sense as with any other group, in the context of Every Child Matters, according to one respondent.

*This is an enormous question but it would be what we call good practice with any other group. The challenge is to get people to remember that it is 'every child' it is not about the 'majority of children' it is about 'every child'.*

A local authority respondent

Some skills which were described as being needed specifically for effective communication and trust-building with GRT families and communities involve mastery of processes which are required for all work with children and families. The processes mentioned include:

- generating realistic expectations
- being respectful
- listening, and responding sensitively
- being aware of body language.

Although these skills may be relevant to all children, specific emphases in the way skills are applied may be required across the range of minority ethnic children and families, including the different GRT communities. It was also emphasised that working with GRT communities requires core professional skills, for example teaching and social work, to be developed to the same levels as for working with all children.

However, it appears from the respondents' comments that in practice, generic communication skills have to be applied in specific ways that draw on context-sensitive social and cultural knowledge. Examples of such knowledge include reasons why trust-building is such a big issue, and why legacies of social exclusion can lead to unrealistic expectations. Working with parents and winning their support is particularly important, so that ability to communicate with adults effectively with this knowledge is central to successful work with GRT children.

A further dimension to the theme of effective communication is that it should be based on an underlying principle of equality. It was said that there is a need to communicate as an equal, not least because of the mistrust GRT children may feel towards authority figures from outside their own community, but also because of culturally-based perceptions of childhood and adulthood – GRT young people expect to communicate with adults on a more equal footing.

*Children are very streetwise you need to speak to them as an equal not as an authority figure.*

A local authority respondent

Communicating with children in this way is a means of supporting the children to feel valued.

*It is very important that all auxiliary staff, secretaries, meal staff, all know that they are front line people and it is very important that they give a warm welcome and make people feel valued.*

A local authority respondent

The point was made by one voluntary sector consultant that there are a cluster of skills around being non-judgemental, showing appropriate empathy, not being too intrusive, and not being patronisingly kind or appreciative. The issue for good practice here is that professionals need to sustain a reasonably ‘balanced’ approach rather than behaving with GRT families in a way that differs strongly from the way they would behave professionally with other clients. The process of suspending judgement in order not to reach partial or over-hasty conclusions depends on a degree of self-awareness. It would seem that effective practice in these areas would draw on knowledge of GRT communities, and perhaps on certain attributes such as a self-reflective quality of openness and flexibility. These factors are discussed further in the next two sub-sections.

#### **2.1.4 Knowledge required for working with the GRT community**

The key knowledge areas which were mentioned include knowledge of national, local and organisational policy, legislation and histories of service delivery, practical knowledge of issues such as data-tracking and analysis systems, and knowledge of GRT communities’ histories, needs, and living and work patterns. There is also knowledge of ‘self’, an aspect of those attributes which are discussed in the next sub-section.

The first area concerns the understanding of key policies around service delivery. The importance was stressed of knowledge of policy around inclusion, e.g. drivers for race equality and community cohesion. It is important for professionals to have a good understanding of national policies which affect their specific service areas, and national policies around integrated services.

*ECM, children's centres, extended services and how they can incorporate Gypsy/Roma Travellers into that.*

A national voluntary sector respondent

It was suggested that there is a need to make linkages between acquiring the legislative and policy knowledge requirements around racism and prejudice and developing the self awareness to examine one's own possible prejudices towards a community.

Certain areas of practical or applied knowledge were described as being particularly important for sensitive work with GRT families. Among these are possessing the necessary understandings of how to collate, track and analyse data about children from GRT families, some of which are highly mobile. Since multi-agency work is central to effective service delivery it is important to have good knowledge of networks.

*A main part of our role is facilitating and directing, because for example, we don't know the housing benefit, and if people don't need advice on that we need to be able to direct them to those services where they can get advice and help.*

A national professional organisation respondent

The 'cultural' knowledge required to work effectively with GRT communities was described in quite varied and complex ways. The ignorance of some professionals is a concern. There is, for example, a need to know the difference between groups, and the appropriate terminology for ascription, which is necessary for data collation and also for developing trusting relationships.

*Other professionals don't know the difference between one group of Travellers and another. Many people aren't aware of what the correct terminology is to describe Travellers and they are also unaware that some of the current terminology commonly used is racist.*

A national voluntary sector respondent

The relevant information is available, but may not be readily accessed by many professionals. New guidance from the DCSF (2008) asks local authorities to make sure schools are aware of the crucial issues concerning ethnic ascription. For early years practitioners, there is further guidance on the Save the Children website <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/>

The view that ‘cultural awareness is the starting point’ was held by several representatives of local authority TESSs. However, cultural awareness is a term which lends itself to many possible interpretations and applications. Most respondents drew attention to the complexity of issues underpinning the development of the knowledge of particular ethnic communities. The awareness required includes a range of factors, for example:

- awareness of the location and make-up of the different Traveller communities
- awareness of site provision and local accommodation needs
- recognising socio-economic as well as cultural factors e.g. the circumstances of many housed Roma
- realising the histories of racism and discrimination that influence current attitudes.

It was emphasised that issues around awareness of possible cultural differences when working with GRT groups are broadly similar to those of working with other minority ethnic groups. It was suggested that professionals need to focus on identifying and responding to any specifically cultural preferences of GRT community members, through a personalised approach i.e. by engaging with community members individually to find their views, rather than by relying on traditional stereotypes of cultural difference.

It might be asked how far some of these key issues described by respondents are best understood as concerning cultural awareness. One respondent stressed that the key issues to do with social exclusion have more to do with lack of quality of facilities, for example on some council sites, and service inflexibility than with any specific cultural factors. It seems that understanding the social circumstances and local and wider history of GRT communities is very important, and that to do this also requires consideration of services’ and professionals’ attitudes and practice in conjunction with communities’ beliefs and practices.

*Gypsies and Travellers are just people, and they have the same needs and desires as everyone else. But they haven't got the facilities that everyone else has got, they are denied access.*

A local authority respondent

Aspects of cultural awareness which touch on community expectations for interaction were said to be important. Here, the underlying emphasis is on sensitivity to how social histories of interaction between providers and communities affect community attitudes rather than static notions of cultural mores.

*Some professionals turn up on a site in a suit and ask to speak to the leader, there is a need to coach people to get them to understand that it is about approaching people in the right way and that Gypsies and Travellers are quite offended by the notion that they need gatekeepers.*

A national voluntary sector respondent

An important aspect of cultural awareness in good practice was said to be ensuring the service delivery environment reflects the diversity of client cultures, for example by ensuring that agencies have materials representing the different cultures.

Understanding gender issues was said to be important, when approaching families on sites. However, there are different views concerning precisely how gender issues affect practice. One respondent made it clear that the voluntary sector organisation for which she works do not agree as a rule with gender matching professionals with clients that they visit. However, she felt that there are some cultural norms to conform to for greater comfort. It was also made clear that the norms are adhered to variably by different families.

*For example, you wouldn't go to a roadside trailer on your own or, as a woman, arrive alone with another man if you don't know how traditional the family you are going to visit is. It is more about professionals knowing that how they act may affect the people they engage with, although this is true of any professionals, not just those working with Gypsies and Travellers.*

A national voluntary sector respondent

Finally, a number of knowledge areas were mentioned when respondents were asked what they felt were important aspects of training needs for professionals. These were:

- knowledge at policy and practice level to dispel racism
- knowledge of joined-up working, support needs and information sharing
- strategies and skills to promote access and inclusion
- awareness of perceptions of the services
- awareness of changes in attitudes to services and expectations
- awareness of cultures, social histories and occupational patterns of GRT communities
- awareness of variations of needs and aspirations of different groups.

### 2.1.5 Attributes required for working with the GRT community

Some professional attributes were described as important to good practice which might be viewed as depending on facets of personality as well as skill and knowledge. One attribute, which five respondents emphasised, is ‘openness’, a quality of receptivity which is perhaps related to the skill of suspending judgement on issues even when there is conflict and heat. In combination with this openness, respondents highlighted reflectiveness, the ability to be mindful about one’s own practice and to learn from this, for example where there might be inadvertent discrimination, as well as other issues. Two different respondents described this combination of openness and flexibility in similar terms:

*an open mind and flexibility are very important because you often have to reassess the way you are working.*

A national voluntary sector respondent

*the need for flexibility, and to be reflective in recognising that sometimes systems are inadvertently discriminating against Gypsies and Travellers.*

A national voluntary sector respondent

Persistence and resilience are also attributes felt to be important. Retaining a positive outlook is essential in the face of persistent challenges. The work is demanding, and can be ‘draining’, so that attributes such as a ‘sense of humour and ability to bounce back’ are very valuable.

Sections 2.1.3-2.1.5 have outlined key skills, knowledge and attributes which professionals require for effective practice. The research has also indicated a number of particular issues which confront professionals wishing to develop in these areas. The key challenges and barriers for professionals needing to develop their knowledge and skills for working with GRT communities are examined in the next chapter, sections 3.1.5-3.1.6.

### 2.1.6 Multi-agency practice

The importance of multi-agency practice was widely recognised. Multi-agency work is vital to good practice at both the strategic decision-making level and also the operational service-delivery level. For example, one local authority TESS consultant teacher described links between TESS and the New Deal Youth Team, providing laptops to mobile Traveller children. The same respondent also mentioned links with the council Youth Service, and Connexions, which are developed through networking



at a professional level and then channelled to the strategy level through a multi-agency forum. TESS professionals build up networks of contacts, described as a 'virtual team' by one respondent, who they meet in relation to particular clients. The importance of having a lead contact for coordinating the work of different professionals with particular families was stressed. At the same time, formalising these networks for multi-agency work was also viewed as desirable, through holding regular formal meetings.

It was stressed that for frontline multi-agency work to be successful it has to be implemented with high levels of professional expertise in the different services. It is important for professionals to have a named person to work with across different services, and for there to be partnership working at different organisational levels. Should there be problems at the frontline level in terms of implementing agreements, then it is necessary to go through senior management.

*Building effective multi-agency links is every bit as important as building the link with the families themselves.*

A local authority respondent

The particular nature of working with GRT communities means that the multi-agency partnership is likely to involve relationships between professionals with quite sharply differentiated service remits. TESS specialists or specialist community health visitors might work with teachers or other health professionals with less community expertise, but more advanced specialist expertise in areas such as classroom learning, and children's health. From the perspective of TESS specialists, a main part of the role was 'facilitating and directing' other professionals to work effectively with the community.

Despite the need for other services to take on greater ownership of work with GRT communities, it was felt that some degree of dedicated work is still needed. Some health visitors and children's centre workers now conduct outreach work, a positive development which involves a degree of mainstreaming of support. At the same time, one view is that good partnership practice involves ongoing management support for the children's centre workers from TESS specialists. A further consideration is that the development of 'locality teams' can be good for locally sensitive multi-agency working, facilitating development of early interventions and improved information sharing. However, there are unresolved issues for effective coordination of services for GRT communities where TESS specialists and some other relevant local authority services are not directly involved with those teams.

Further discussion of multi-agency work is presented in section 5.2.6, where the specific focus is on training and learning opportunities.

### 2.1.7 Supporting other professionals

It was recognised that ongoing support for frontline professionals is needed. For example, good practice would involve joint working between frontline professionals who work with Travellers and community specialists such as TESS specialists. In one local authority, all new Education Welfare Officers spend some time with the TESS team and go out on initial joint visits to be introduced to families.

A number of different ways in which professionals can be supported in their daily practice were suggested, including:

- **joint planning:** for example, planning by teachers around Assessment for Learning as a classroom process and how this might be adapted for GRT families
- **strategy review:** for example, reviewing strategies which promote equitable access to local authority services for their effectiveness, in particular those which concern supportive working relationships between specialist services and mainstream providers
- **partnership work:** for example, providing guidance for professionals on areas of client-focused partnership work, such as assessments, which can involve sharing of good practice
- **developing resources together:** for example, supporting professionals to develop outreach materials such as an early years book.

Regarding partnership work, strategic sharing of good practice (as opposed to unplanned or unsystematic sharing) was considered to be important. If sharing of good practice is to be continuous and systematic, there needs to be both structured training and partnership working, in the view of one TESS coordinator. It was also emphasised that if the strategy is for learning to be facilitated informally through partnership work, the staff need to be made aware that the work offers an informal training experience and given some guidance on this. Further to that, time needs to be built in to reflect and learn from these experiences, which then might be facilitated through some kind of formal training. Evidence of ways in which sharing good practice can provide professionals with learning opportunities is discussed in sections 5.2.3, 5.2.5 and 5.2.6.

### 2.1.8 Strategic support for local authority services

It was emphasised that it is important to provide strategic input or support for local authority leaders as well as frontline professionals. For example, in one local authority, the TESS team have involved the Chief Executive in shadowing them in their daily work, and have also involved Travellers in making presentations to elected members. It was also pointed out that a large number of local authority services work with Travellers in relation to securing ECM outcomes e.g. around education, health, and well-being, and that support is needed to build relationships with and between these mainstream providers.

### 2.1.9 Strategic integration of practice with wider policy agendas

Strategic integration of practice with GRT communities with wider policy agendas is a central dimension of good practice, as it is ‘important to highlight good practice at both policy level and practice level’. Key factors which underpin this integration were said to include leadership, high-level policy around inclusion and mainstreaming, and a quality focus.

Winning the support of senior leadership is clearly important for effective practice. It was suggested by several respondents that this might be most effective if GRT policy is effectively embedded within wider equalities and inclusion agendas. The view was expressed strongly that strategic drivers of good practice across mainstream rather than only specialist services need to be developed by local authorities. Targets should be substantially embedded in Children and Young People’s Plans, specifically for the GRT ethnic groups, and training targets should be embedded ‘at all levels’. From this perspective, there is a need to mark achievement and plot movement forward against key target areas. It was also said that at the strategic level, such drivers show individual agencies the direction of travel and point to the quality of service that is expected.

*The strategic level achieves two things, one about giving a target so that there is some quantifiable idea of where you are going, and the other more qualitative idea is of individual agencies knowing what they should be doing.*

A local authority respondent

Part of the strategic importance of embedding targets would be to drive forward a shift away from the over-reliance on particular services e.g. TESS ‘providing services around passport access, benefit access, health, and the list goes on’.

*Building strategic references to Travellers ensures that all agencies pick up their brief, for example around non-attendance*

A local authority respondent

It was emphasised that good practice involves taking on board that key service drivers and targets, for example in health around infant mortality, life expectancy, and levels of mental health, apply across the diversity of ethnic groups including GRT groups. In this way, the strategic aim is to use specialist services to promote equality through facilitating equal access to mainstream services. It was also argued by respondents that it is important to influence strategically significant organisations, such as the Ofsted inspectorate, which has an impact on schools. There are evidently complex issues of implementation but the awareness of key strategies and their implications for leverage is important.

## 2.2 Key points

A number of key themes were raised by interviewees in relation to what constitutes good practice in working with children, young people and families from GRT communities.

- **The importance of involving the GRT community in developing practice.** Some approaches were described that highlight whole-community development, while others involve community members' contribution to service development and training, and a third strand concerns service delivery to client families. The advocacy model has been recommended, with its underlying concern for trust-building and supporting community members towards greater control over service delivery.
- **Outreach work.** The importance of outreach work and on-site provision of services was emphasised as a means of overcoming legacies of mistrust and inaccessible or inflexible services. The point was also made that outreach work should be developed in a strategic context which ensures that GRT children, families and communities obtain the same quality of services as the wider community.
- **Skills required to work with GRT communities.** Effective communication should, it was said, also be based on an underlying principle of equality. Many communication skills which are important for good practice are generic to work with children and families. Some skills which were described as being needed specifically for effective communication and trust-building involve mastery of processes which are required for all work with children and families. The processes mentioned include generating realistic expectations; being respectful; listening, and responding sensitively. In practice, generic communication skills have to be applied in specific ways that draw on context-sensitive social and cultural knowledge.

- **Knowledge required to work with GRT communities.** The key knowledge areas which were mentioned include knowledge of national local and organisational policy, legislation and histories of service delivery, practical knowledge of data-tracking and analysis systems, and knowledge of GRT communities' specific histories, needs, and living and work patterns. Cultural awareness is a term with many possible applications. Most respondents drew attention to the complexity of issues underpinning the development of the knowledge of particular ethnic communities.
- **Attributes required to work with GRT communities.** An attribute which several respondents emphasised is 'openness', a quality of receptivity related to the skill of suspending judgement on issues. In combination with this openness, respondents highlighted reflectiveness. Persistence and resilience are also felt to be important
- **Multi-agency practice.** Multi-agency work is vital to good practice at both the strategic decision-making level and also the operational service-delivery level. The multi-agency partnership is likely to involve relationships between professionals with quite sharply differentiated service remits. A main part of the specialist's role might be 'facilitating and directing' other professionals to work effectively with the community. Despite the need for other services to take on greater ownership of work with GRT communities, it was felt that some degree of dedicated work is still needed.
- **Supporting other professionals.** A number of different ways in which professionals can be supported in their daily practice were suggested, including: joint planning; strategy review; partnership work with clients; developing resources together.
- **Strategic priorities around sharing good practice, support for LA services and the integration of practice with wider policy agendas.** Strategic integration of practice with GRT communities with wider policy agendas is a central dimension of good practice. Key factors which support integration at a policy level include leadership, high-level policy around inclusion and mainstreaming, and a quality focus. The need for more far-reaching embedding of policy concerning service delivery to GRT communities in local authority targets and practice was highlighted. Regarding sharing good frontline practice, a strategic approach is recommended. If training is intended to be implemented informally through partnership work, the staff need to be made aware that the work offers an informal training experience. Further to that, time needs to be built in to reflect and learn from these experiences, e.g. through subsequent formal training. It is also important to provide strategic input or support for local authority leaders as well as frontline professionals.

### 3. Challenges in relation to working with GRT communities

#### What the literature says

The literature indicates a number of challenges in relation to current practice in service provision and delivery. One such challenge is training, which is discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5 of this report. However, there are also several other significant challenges which affect practice.

- *Developing long-term and strategic approaches.* Key factors which inhibit longer-term service development include: short-term crisis management (McNeil *et al*, 2005); issues around insecurity of accommodation (The Connexions Traveller Education Social Services Alliance, 2005); inter-organisational differences around data-sharing (The Connexions Traveller Education Social Services Alliance, 2005); lack of central involvement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in policy development ; the need for a capacity building approach (Diacon *et al*, 2007).
- *Information sharing.* Key concerns include inadequate ethnic monitoring and inter-organisational differences around data-sharing (Essex County Council, 2004; DCSF, 2008).
- *Complexities of cultural awareness.* Tensions persist around addressing the ambiguities and uncertainties of professionals' beliefs and understandings concerning cultural factors as an influence on good practice. For example, the value set on cultural traditions may occasionally conflict with ideas about progressive practice to support social inclusion (Morran, 2002). The importance of developing awareness of cultural factors without perpetuating cultural or ethnic stereotyping is highlighted (Hester, 2004).
- *Balance of focus.* There are dilemmas of obtaining an *appropriate balance of focus and resources* between provision specifically targeted towards GRT communities, and mainstream service provision (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).
- *Conflicting priorities within multi-agency working.* Developing multi-agency work can be challenging where the remits of different services can be dramatically divergent (Warrington and Peck, 2005) e.g. the contrast between the educational remit of the TESS and the enforcement remit of the police .
- *Home environments.* Making best use of home environments involves facing challenges around geography: mobility and travel patterns; transport; professional views and attitudes: lack of familiarity; safety concerns; shortage of places; security fears (Riches, 2007).
- *Including Gypsies and Travellers in service development.* Many services have not made serious attempts to include Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in service development – this perpetuates mutual mistrust and misunderstanding (Cemlyn, 2000).
- Among the key themes from the literature review which were supported with new evidence in this study, challenges of services managing *competing remits* and affording *low priority* to GRT communities are reported in this chapter (section 3.1.4).
- This chapter also reports on new evidence concerning a number of inter-related themes which are covered in less depth in most of the literature. These themes

concern the *cultures* of some services (e.g. their inflexibility) (section 3.1.1), the *beliefs and attitudes* of some professionals (section 3.1.6), and perceptions that some services are widely mistrusted by many GRT families, in the context of *wider values in society* (section 3.1.3).

- The analysis highlights the underlying challenge of *building trusting relations* with GRT families, and the implications of this in terms of strategic and frontline *partnerships* between professionals (section 3.1.8).

### 3.1 The main barriers to good practice

Some general themes emerged across the local authorities involved in the study concerning the main barriers to the good practice identified. These can be grouped as follows:

- services having insufficient flexibility to meet the needs of different GRT communities
- continuity of service provision.
- the impact of wider societal values on services
- service capacity and competing priorities
- professional beliefs and attitudes
- access and inclusion
- views and attitudes of the GRT community.

The following sections consider each of these themes in turn, highlighting the key challenges which were raised in the interviews. Whilst the majority of respondents were affiliated to the TESS, some of the challenges which they described would apply to all professionals working with Gypsies and Travellers, whilst others would apply particularly strongly to professionals working in services which do not have the same level of engagement as the TESS.

#### 3.1.1 Insufficient service flexibility

The importance of individual attributes of openness and flexibility for effective professional practice was highlighted in chapter 2.1.5. The concern that some services lack sufficient organisational flexibility to meet the needs of GRT communities was raised by several respondents. This inflexibility can be seen as an aspect of organisational culture i.e. the specific values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organization and that control the way they interact with each other and with others outside the organization. One way in which lack of flexibility was manifested was related to the pressure to meet targets and therefore solve problems.



This could lead to professionals imposing solutions on GRT families rather than engaging on the basis of equality.

*Gypsies and Travellers won't engage with people when they think they are imposing something on their beliefs or family or community.*

A local authority respondent

Another dimension of service inflexibility that was mentioned was through a shortage of outreach work i.e. professionals 'going on to sites to deliver services'. This issue has been addressed in cases where TESS staff support other service professionals (for example from children's centres) when visiting sites in partnership, helping them to develop trust and confidence. A related issue, raised by a trainer from the voluntary sector, is that professionals may take the view that GRT families are so 'nomadic' and 'hard-to-reach' that they cannot be accessed, thus justifying the lack of effectiveness of services. In this example, it can be seen that service inflexibility is underpinned by attitudinal barriers. One local authority respondent said that obtaining statements of special educational needs is a lengthy process, and some schools 'won't bother' because of their belief that families may have 'moved on'.

Several interviewees emphasised what they viewed as the 'disjuncture' between service systems and GRT families that can be particularly evident over transitional events in Travellers lives and interactions with institutions. It was said that the transition to secondary schools is a particularly problematic time, for various reasons, including demands of institutional life often not bending to the expectations of Traveller families. Examples offered for consideration by interviewees included strict uniform regulations, which may meet with stiffer resistance in secondary schools, and mobile phone restrictions, which were said by one respondent to 'not fit into Travellers' way of life'.

### **3.1.2 Continuity of service provision**

A further major challenge raised in the interviews concerns ensuring the continuity of provision with families, and the sustainability of services for communities.

When working with individual families, it was said that ensuring continuity can be a challenge with the high levels of mobility of some Traveller families. The importance for professionals of building sufficient trust with families they work with was highlighted, so that when family members move, they inform the service providers of



their destination. This information then needs to be shared with other authorities so that there can be continuity of services.

A related dimension of transferring knowledge consists of ensuring that services other than the specialist Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) take greater ownership of family and community-focused outreach work. It was said that a challenge is to enable TESS workers to distance themselves somewhat from their close involvement with particular families, while often remaining in contact, and to enable relationships between families and other services providers to develop effectively.

### 3.1.3 Impact of wider societal values on services

Some interviewees attributed procedural inflexibility and the attitudes and practices of some professionals to the wider societal context. In particular it was said that ‘the media’, reflecting broader prejudiced societal attitudes through negative portrayal of GRT communities, also stimulated many professionals’ fear of going onto sites.

*Due to negative media coverage, a lot of professional adults that work with young people have very negative attitudes about Gypsies and Travellers – there is a lot of fear due to ignorance, a lot of workers are concerned about going onto a Travellers’ site.*

A national voluntary sector respondent

It was pointed out by several interviewees that the prejudiced attitudes of wider society inform professionals’ viewpoints and practices without them necessarily being aware of this: ‘subconsciously we are absorbing it all’.

### 3.1.4 Service capacity and competing priorities

A number of respondents explained that mainstream services and some local authorities tend to afford a low priority to making provision for GRT children and families and to spend little on it.

*Some local authorities find it easier to avoid the issue of travellers publicly, as such there is a lack of funds and support for the issues*

A national voluntary sector respondent

They also indicated that many professionals may not see GRT provision as a priority if they only work with a relatively small number of GRT children.

*For many professionals, working with Travellers is only one part of their job so they are not necessarily going to make it a top priority.*

A local authority respondent

It was also said that the issue of low and competing priorities could be detrimental to attempts to develop effective partnership working. The issue of some services' and professionals' reluctance to take ownership for meeting Travellers' needs was discussed with the example of TESS 'having to work on issues that should be handled by other services'.

*When a child goes travelling, schools should be providing work packs but the schools feel this is the responsibility of the TESS. Schools use the TESS to transport sick children back to Travellers' [homes].*

A local authority respondent

Section 2.1.6 highlighted as an aspect of good practice the importance of universal services taking on greater ownership of work with GRT communities whilst also emphasising that some degree of dedicated work is still needed. The concern that 'mainstream services' rely on specialist services rather than take on board best practice has a strategic dimension in terms of service partnerships, which is discussed in the next section. A related aspect of mainstream services' reliance on specialist services, particularly the TESS, to deliver services which are being given a low priority, is that the segregation of specialist services could have limiting effects on the careers of the specialist professionals involved. It was said by the coordinator of a consortium of Traveller Education Services that professionals in Traveller education can find it hard to get back into mainstream education, and maintain professional development around educational development and the school curriculum.

In some local authorities, low funding was felt to result in low prioritisation, according to a respondent from a national voluntary organisation. The 'reluctance' of local authorities to stand up to popular prejudice could result in lack of funding, support and strategic leadership, and inconsistent, non-joined up policy across departments, although community cohesion agendas should provide a strong imperative. It was also said by a TESS coordinator that the difficulty of winning funds for Gypsy or Traveller projects was partly caused by the criteria for funding, which

‘settled society’ set, and partly because GRT communities may lack the skills to present their case to win funding.

### 3.1.5 Professionals’ knowledge

The themes around professionals’ knowledge, attitudes, and practice were discussed by respondents in the context of those concerns about wider societal influences, service cultures, and strategic challenges that have already been summarised. Section 2.1.4 highlighted the importance for effective practice of knowledge of national, local and organisational policy, practical knowledge of issues such as data-tracking and analysis systems, and knowledge of GRT communities’ histories, needs and circumstances.

In particular, among this range of important knowledge areas, many professionals may lack sufficiently particular and local knowledge of the histories and cultures and economic circumstances of diverse GRT groups. Some key challenges for professionals which were mentioned include:

- acknowledging the effects of lack of knowledge – such as fear of professionals to set foot on a site
- maintaining up-to-date or accurate information about the culture and ethnicity of the groups
- identifying where to source this information
- recognising variation within and between different GRT groups
- resisting over-idealistic or negative stereotyping – being realistic.

It was also highlighted that it is a challenge to provide positive experiential knowledge which can transform negative beliefs and attitudes. For example, if professionals have no first hand experience of GRT families, the kinds of stereotypes which are perpetuated within the media and wider society may lead to them being afraid of visiting sites. This reluctance to visit sites due to fear, stereotypes and racism often prevents the opportunities for first-hand learning from arising.

### 3.1.6 Professional beliefs and attitudes

Some of the challenges concerning professionals’ beliefs and attitudes were raised by local authority TESS staff in terms of the impact that other professionals’ beliefs have on their own practice. Section 2.1.3 highlighted the range of skills which are needed for effective communication with GRT families, which draw on ‘universal’ processes

such as being respectful and listening and responding sensitively. Section 2.1.5 also emphasised the importance of attributes of openness and reflectiveness which support effective listening and decision-making.

However, professionals will only use their skills effectively if positive attitudes underlie the main communication processes. One respondent felt that working with 'other professionals' (in this case, school staff) is the 'biggest challenge'.

*The main problem is the attitudes and preconceived ideas of other professionals.*

A local authority respondent

It was stressed that specialist professionals, such as those within the TESS, can only fulfil an advisory role in many cases, so that the persistent challenge is one of motivation: to present opportunities to other professionals and services in ways that will make them *want* to do things in different ways.

If professionals hold negative perspectives about GRT families and communities, it was said that then they are not going to feel happy and comfortable in that environment. The discomfort and fear lead to resistance to learning and development.

Again from the perspective of the professionals within a specialist service (TESS), another respondent emphasised that the lack of knowledge from other professionals and the wider community which perpetuates 'prejudice, myths and stereotypes' about the Traveller community may also impact negatively on perceptions about the specialists themselves who can be seen as 'part of the community'. Therefore, it was said that staff that work with Travellers can face some of the same discrimination that Travellers face.

For all professionals the importance of retaining a balanced and objective view was emphasised. It is important for professionals not to get emotionally over-involved, but to be able to see 'the whole issue' from different perspectives and to 'strip it down' analytically. 'Realism' was emphasised as a priority, in the sense that it normalises communities to apply broadly similar moral criteria to them as to wider society.

*The bottom line is they are all people, shaped by their experiences.*

A national professional organisation respondent

The need to be able to resist emotional over-involvement was seen as an aspect of the strength of character that is also needed to resist and challenge stereotypes and racism when they appear among other professionals.

*Prejudice is there, and often you go into schools and the prejudice is there that they don't even realise is there within staff.*

A national professional organisation respondent

### **3.1.7 Access and inclusion**

Despite the importance of particular strategies such as outreach work, as discussed in section 2.1.2, which promote more accessible services, a range of persistent challenges were highlighted concerning access to services, and the inclusion and achievement of GRT communities, particularly for the more mobile communities. Many of these challenges can be seen as representing the other side of the same coin as the challenges of service inflexibility, strategic prioritisation, and professional attitudes and knowledge which have been summarised in previous sub-sections. For example, it was said by local authority respondents that some settled families are difficult to identify and that it can be a challenge to locate highly mobile families. These challenges are linked to the concerns previously expressed that some mainstream services attribute shortcomings of inflexible or poorly targeted provision to clients being 'hard-to-reach'. In the wider social sense, there is clearly a connection between social and institutional barriers to inclusion, including prejudice and service inflexibility, and the cautious practices of GRT communities themselves in relation to services. It was said that community cohesion is an issue, as GRT communities are excluded and may also self-exclude.

Barriers were also identified in terms of access to services for different age groups. For example, it was said that youth work resources for 16-18 year old young people tend to be located far from sites. At the other end of the age spectrum for children's services, difficulties were described in getting children to playgroups due to transport issues. Funding for outreach projects such as playbuses which visit sites are sometimes short-term, and target-driven service criteria for resource allocation have often not favoured resourcing sustained outreach work. It seems clear that longer-term goals and targets for sustainable development are required.

The challenge of matching provision of educational and health services to highly mobile families on road side encampments was discussed. For example, whilst the vast majority of GRT families choose to access education, it would seem there is at

least sometimes a mismatch between families' perceptions of the service on offer and providers' perceptions of clients' needs. The comments provided by one respondent indicate a particularly strong view of this mismatch

*We don't provide tutoring on the side of the road but what we would welcome is for those children to come to school and they don't.*

A local authority respondent

An underpinning aspect of the challenge in this case is to identify the factors which cause the frequent movement: for example whether it is associated with enforced homelessness or voluntary nomadism. Understanding these factors would be a first step in efforts towards effective and responsive joined-up work between services and more flexible and appropriate provision. One local authority respondent, however, stressed that missing out on early years education is detrimental to chances of later attainment in schools. The challenge of underachievement was identified as crucial: 'the key one when working with Traveller children'.

The challenge of identifying some settled families in order to provide services to them was also highlighted. Factors underlying this issue include mistrust of authorities, issues over the self-ascribed identity choices of housed GRT families,<sup>4</sup> and the degrees of integration with the wider settled community and the GRT community.

### **3.1.8 Views and attitudes of the GRT community**

A range of challenges were attributed by respondents to the views and attitudes of the GRT community. Only a small proportion of respondents in the research were members of the GRT community so these are primarily 'etic' views of those outside the community. Two main groups of themes occurred in the responses, those which concern 'cultural views', and those which concern 'trust'.

The theme of cultural views and attitudes posing a barrier to good practice was introduced by one TESS respondent. The opinion was expressed that parental attitudes to education were not always supportive: specifically, for example, fathers not wanting their sons to have an academic type and level of education which they had not had. On the other hand, the same parents were said to be much more supportive of educational opportunities to learn a skill or trade.

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<sup>4</sup> Many GRT family member choose not to disclose ethnic identity on official documentation for fear of discrimination. (DCSF, 2008).

Far more often, the respondents expounded on the theme of trust. The importance of involving the GRT community in service development and delivery was discussed in section 1.1.1, with trust-building a major objective, and the value of an outreach approach for trust building was considered in section 1.1.2. Persistent concerns about ‘access’ to some services such as Housing and Social Services are fuelled in part by the perception that GRT communities may mistrust these services, feeling that in the past the services concerned have delivered policies concerned with enforcement and control.

*Housing workers and social workers are likely to be much less welcome*

A local authority respondent

It was said that families do not always have a thorough understanding of the varied remits of services, and are very wary of services such as education, welfare or social services taking control of their children. However, to illustrate that the importance of trust-building is not confined to any particular constellation of professions or services, there was also mention of reluctance among some families to become involved with services such as dentistry and speech therapy.

In the face of legacies of mistrust, the challenge of building trusting relations is highlighted. A TESS respondent commented that a major challenge is to build trusting relationships so that professionals will be informed when key events occur, for example a Traveller family moves home. Having this information then allows the professionals to share information effectively through partnership working with other authorities. The challenge of building trusting relationships is made more bracing if families move on quickly due to enforcement or choice, or where there are past or ongoing conflicts with other services, for example fuelled by legacies of poor site maintenance by authorities or of enforced resettlement.

## 3.2 Key points

The main barriers to/challenges for good practice identified across the local authorities involved in the study included:

- **Insufficient service flexibility.** The concern was raised that some services lack sufficient flexibility to meet the needs of GRT communities. Illustrating this inflexibility, there was a shortage of outreach work i.e. professionals ‘going on to sites to deliver services’, and also an element of intrusiveness as pressure to meet targets and solve problems can lead to professionals imposing solutions on GRT families rather than engaging on the basis of equality.

- **Continuity of service provision.** It was said that ensuring continuity is always a challenge with the high levels of mobility of some Traveller families. The importance was highlighted of finding ways to transfer learning between families across the community, particularly in cases where the individual family members may move to another location. A related dimension of transferring knowledge consists in ensuring that services other than the specialist TESS take greater ownership of family and community focused outreach work.
- **The impact of wider societal values on services.** It was pointed out by several interviewees that the prejudiced attitudes of wider society as reflected in the media inform professionals' viewpoints and practices without them necessarily being aware of this: 'subconsciously we are absorbing it all'.
- **Service capacity and competing priorities.** Some mainstream services afford a low priority to making provision for GRT children and families. The issue of some services' and professionals' reluctance to take ownership for meeting Travellers' needs was discussed with the example of TESS 'having to work on issues that should be handled by other services'. The reluctance of local authorities to stand up to popular prejudice could result in lack of funding, support and strategic leadership, and inconsistent, non-joined up policy across departments, although community cohesion agendas should provide a strong imperative.
- **Strategic-level challenges.** The strategic level of developing good practice needs to be addressed. The lack of strategic leadership in many local authorities was mentioned as being a result of affording the issues a low priority.
- **Professionals' knowledge.** A particular theme is that many professionals may lack sufficiently particular and local knowledge of the histories and cultures and economic circumstances of diverse GRT groups. Challenges which were mentioned also include recognising socio-economic as well as cultural factors and realising the histories of racism and discrimination that influence current attitudes. It is also a challenge to provide positive experiential knowledge which can transform negative beliefs and attitudes
- **Professional beliefs and attitudes.** Some of the challenges concerning professionals' beliefs and attitudes were raised by local authority TESS staff in terms of the impact that other professionals beliefs have on their own practice. For all professionals the importance of retaining a balanced and objective view was emphasised. The need to be able to resist emotional over-involvement was seen as important, and also the capacity to resist and challenge stereotypes and racism when they appear among other professionals.
- **Access and inclusion.** Barriers were also identified of access to services for different age groups. It was said by local authority respondents that some settled families are difficult to identify and that it can be a challenge to locate highly mobile families. These challenges are linked to the concerns previously expressed that some mainstream services attribute shortcomings of inflexible or poorly targeted provision to clients being 'hard-to-reach'. The challenge of matching provision of educational and health services to highly mobile families on roadside encampments was discussed: it would seem there is sometimes a basic mismatch between the service on offer and the clients' needs.



- **Views and attitudes of the GRT community.** Concerns about ‘access’ to some services such as Housing and Social Services’ are fuelled in part by the perception that GRT communities may mistrust these services, feeling that in the past the services concerned have delivered policies concerned with enforcement and control. In the face of legacies of mistrust, the challenge of building trusting relations is highlighted.

## **PART TWO:**

### **LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS FACTORS, AND IMPACTS IN TRAINING FOR WORKING WITH GRT COMMUNITIES**

**The second part of the report presents the findings on the nature and scope of existing learning opportunities, as well as challenges and success factors in terms of training, for working with GRT communities.**

**Chapter 4 identifies the learning opportunities, information and support available to staff. General themes which are discussed include: the types of learning opportunities; who delivers the training; the services receiving GRT-related training/support; how training was commissioned; and how it was promoted to the workforce.**

**Chapter 5 considers the effectiveness of training, challenges to accessing training, support and information, and the factors that contribute to successful training and opportunities for learning. The chapter draws on six case study visits in addition to the telephone interviews.**

**Chapter 6 provides an overview of the impacts resulting from participation in training/learning focusing on GRT communities. The chapter draws on the evidence from each of the six case studies.**

## 4. Types of learning opportunity, information and support available to staff

### What the literature says

The extent to which the literature highlights training, support and information provision specifically is quite limited and incidental.

- Most examples of training events concern cultural awareness and communication e.g. engagement skills for outreach; understanding the cultural factors in the use of media e.g. spoken, written and visual communication, and ICT; understanding linkages between formally learned skills and self-employment opportunities; mediation (The Connexions Traveller Education Support Services Alliance, 2006; Diacon *et al*, 2007).
- Trainers need to design training programmes with sensitivity to the local contexts of GRT communities (Coxhead, 2004) and of the different professional groups involved (Hatley-Broad, 2004).
- There are few attempts in the literature to systematically evaluate a formal training programme, e.g. including needs assessment and quality assurance.
- The discussion of informal learning opportunities highlights multi-agency work, job shadowing, exchange visits and school partnerships (Essex County Council, 2004; Scottish Executive, 2003).
- Much current training and associated support work has been developed through specific initiatives of Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) professionals (Riches, 2007; Derrington and Kendall, 2004): there is a need for more systematic training with more input from other mainstream services (Derrington, 2005).
- This study has confirmed that the majority of training continues to be provided by *TESS professionals* (section 4.3), and presents evidence of new initiatives they have been developing, in partnerships both with GRT community members and professionals from other services, to develop learning opportunities for a *wider range of different professional groups* (section 4.4-4.5).
- Whereas the existing literature mainly provides unevaluated descriptions of formal training, this study has identified and explored a *continuum of training*. This continuum runs from *formal events* (sections 4.1.3-4.1.4) to more relaxed open sessions and *informal learning opportunities* involving outreach work, work shadowing, and attendance at multi-agency meetings (section 4.2).

### 4.1 Focus of learning opportunities

The focus for training, in terms of topics covered and learning objectives, differed across the local authorities surveyed. However, there are some general themes underpinning how local authorities focus their training. These can be grouped into the following five categories:

- general contextual information
- the GRT community's own perspective

- training tailored to specific services
- practical working advice / support for schools and other services
- multi-agency work and information sharing.

These themes also emerged from the interviews conducted with four training providers.

#### 4.1.1 General Contextual Information

The majority of training across all authorities and the four training providers included aspects on culture, community, prejudice and racism issues. One of the training providers suggested that training should cover the basics including; who are Travellers, what the challenges are, why there needs to be a focus on these communities, and information covering these communities' culture and backgrounds.

This training provider from a national voluntary agency suggested:

*that the aim of providing cultural and background information should be so that people get away from the idea that these communities don't achieve or engage and that they learn that these communities are coherent but are also under a lot of stress.*

Another training provider from a different national voluntary agency stated;

*The focus of the training is focused on who and what Gypsies and Travellers are. There is also more generic information on who are Gypsies and Travellers, the fact is there are not a long list of cultural norms but there are some similarities. I will go through some of the important cultural rituals around birth, marriages and deaths. Then I talk about the issues that Gypsies and Travellers face and we go into accommodation, training about the law and the impact of moving and the impact of that on children, and children's experiences of being evicted.*

A suggestion from one of the training providers was that training should stress the similarities between GRT communities and the rest of the public. They provided the example that everyone has concerns for their children and from this they attempt to instil recognition of the similarities and a respect for the differences between communities.

Many of the local authority representatives interviewed provided similar background information to that outlined by the training providers. One authority representative explained to us that they cover how the cultural aspects of GRT life can affect

learning. They give specific examples of how the parent's level of literacy can impact on the child and how lack of space can make it difficult for children to complete homework. In another authority, one interviewee noted that the main focus of their training is the development of cultural knowledge and that any training concerning skills is incidental. The skills training that is included in their training involves providing advice on how to approach and communicate with GRT families.

In a number of authorities, it was felt that it was important to include historical context in training. One authority representative stated that feedback from their training shows that it is important to include the history of the GRT community in training. They commented that learning about the historical context is important as it helps to develop an understanding of behavioural issues, issues around prejudice and why GRT communities experience fear. Historical knowledge is also valuable as it helps to put current issues into context and to understand the laws relating to GRT communities.

It appears that in many authorities it was felt that training did not need to be geared to specific GRT groups as it was thought to be best to provide people with general information. However, in two of the authorities, it was mentioned that training geared towards specific GRT groups is provided. These authorities delivered training that is specific to the Roma community, as their local area has large populations from this community. One of these authorities has provided training to schools which focused on this specific group. Whenever they provide training on a specific group they always try to include information about other GRT groups as well. In the other authority, it was also noted that in all their training, explanation about the different groups is given, for example, on where they come from and the differences between the groups. They also provide specific Roma training that tends to concentrate on the hostility and racism towards Roma communities in their home countries. In general, the training providers also included information on the different GRT groups in their training.

One authority was reported to provide a one-hour presentation during training which focused on GRT communities and what issues they may encounter when accessing local services. In other authorities, interviewees did not mention that they specifically cover GRT access to local services during their training. It is worth noting that most interviewees reported that they were likely to address these issues through multi-agency projects and meetings.

GRT access to services was covered in training by the majority of the training providers. When one of the training providers gives training to specific local authority services or other organisations they will focus on what these professionals can do for the GRT community and provide them with a ‘resource catalogue’ outlining how they can access appropriate resources. Another training provider described their approach to helping services engage with local GRT communities as ‘hand holding’. They provided advice on good practice, an example of which is shown below:

*... establishing trust and having a wide enough agenda so that Gypsy and Travellers know that you are engaging with them not doing things to them.*

A national voluntary sector training provider

Training which covered aspects of the law in relation to the GRT community was mentioned in one local authority. Aspects of the law appeared to be an important topic for the training providers and the majority of them included this in their training.

As mentioned later in this section of the report, a number of authorities shared learning and best practice through multi-agency projects and meetings. It may be that, for some authorities, these multi-agency forums were the arena for sharing local knowledge rather than covering local perspectives specifically during training sessions. The next section of the report considers the use of local GRT individuals in the delivery of training. Although not specifically mentioned, it may be the case that training that includes local GRT individuals is likely to cover local examples and issues. All the training providers interviewed included a local context to their training, which might include the needs and issues for local GRT communities and what facilities are provided locally.

#### **4.1.2 The GRT community’s own perspective**

In just over a third of the authorities, it was strongly felt that it was important to include in training some aspects that covered the GRT community’s own perspective on their culture, lifestyle and other issues. The majority of those interviewees who felt that it was important that the GRT community perspective was included in training did so by including members of the community in the training process.

One authority that involves the GRT community in its training asks them to tell their own story and then to answer questions from the audience. It was reported that people will then often talk about sensitive issues such as ‘why do Travellers leave rubbish’ and ‘there was a burglary down my road and it was the Travellers’. In fact the feeling

from the authorities and training providers that do include the GRT community in their training is that it is very important that people are given the opportunity to discuss these issues and other misconceptions openly with members of the GRT community.

Mostly it is GRT adults that assist in the delivery of training but one training provider has found that it is extremely valuable to involve GRT children in training. The GRT children involved in this training talk about their life, answer questions from the audience and play a true / false game with the trainees. This training provider explained why it was so important to include children in training:

*It is more important that adults learn what children think they need to know about their culture not what other adults think that professionals should know about their culture.*

A national voluntary sector training provider

Some other authorities chose to show films about and including the GRT community so that trainees could better understand these communities.

*Community voices are always powerful and whenever they are used, even if it is only on DVD, it is a powerful medium to use because ultimately I'm not a Traveller, I'm a trainer in Traveller issues, it is similar to someone giving training about Afro-Caribbean young people when you are not Afro-Caribbean, so you're at an obvious disadvantage there.*

A local authority respondent

The same respondent as quoted above did however suggest that the best way to improve their training would be to incorporate more direct involvement from GRT individuals.

Another authority has produced a book and film featuring the GRT community and this has proved to be a valuable tool for people to develop an understanding of GRT life from their own perspective. This example is presented in case study E (see Appendix 2).

### **4.1.3 Training tailored to specific services**

Local authority representatives reported that training had been provided to a large range of services, including: health, early years providers, schools, further education (FE) colleges, youth offending teams, home education providers, education welfare,

fire services, school governors, housing, police, prison, crown prosecution service, trainee teachers, voluntary organisations, mobile library staff, Connexions and youth workers. Many of the authority representatives and all the training providers questioned commented on the importance of tailoring training to the needs of the specific service that is being trained. This can be achieved by:

- liaising with service managers prior to training
- using trainers that have prior or current work experience in a given service
- GRT specialists spending time working within, or closely with, staff from other services
- staff from other services shadowing GRT specialists
- asking for questions to be submitted prior to training
- promoting discussions during training sessions.

An interviewee from one authority talked specifically about providing training to health workers. He/she noted that training would not generally focus on cultural issues but would concentrate on the diet, lifestyle, access to medical care and the life expectancy of GRT communities.

Another authority planned a conference that was specifically for early years staff to learn about the GRT community. The Early Years service was able to fund two external experts to speak at the conference. A GRT individual with expertise in story telling was invited to make a presentation and ran a workshop, while an expert in English as an additional language (EAL) also presented.

A number of authorities provide training that is delivered specifically to teacher trainees. Later in this report in case study A example 2 (see Appendix 2) one lecturer explains his feeling that it is so important to provide training relating to GRT communities to trainee teachers. Another local authority representative explained why they felt it was so important to provide this training to trainee teachers:

*You can go back a pace here and spend more time looking at personal racism and prejudice issues and try to draw them out and try to get them to examine the particular underachievement of these groups as opposed to other minority ethnic groups. Then you can draw them into good practice and good ideas for the use of resources.*

A local authority respondent



#### 4.1.4 Practical working advice for schools and other services

More than two-thirds of the authorities questioned delivered training that provided techniques, strategies or resources that would provide practical assistance to professionals in their work with members of the GRT communities. This practical advice may have been disseminated in a number of ways, including:

- discussions and advice given during training sessions
- sharing of good practice during multi-agency, school and other meetings.
- GRT specialists spending time working within or closely with staff from other services.
- staff from other services shadowing GRT specialists,
- working on cross-service projects.
- providing resources to services that are more appropriate for working with GRT communities.

Some examples of practical advice for working with the GRT community that were provided during training included:

- discussing the different gender roles in GRT communities, for example what would be appropriate for a male worker to discuss with GRT females
- giving examples of tasks/resources that school staff could use when working with GRTs
- ensuring that people understand how important it is to build good relationships within the GRT community
- helping people to understand language that may be GRT specific
- advice on how to communicate with GRT communities, for example do not hand out leaflets as you cannot assume a certain standard of literacy and provide assistance to complete any forms.

#### 4.1.5 Multi-agency work and information sharing

Multi-agency work was an important focus for sharing of good practice for many of the local authorities questioned, at both the strategic decision-making level and also the frontline service-delivery level, as section 2.1.6 indicated. In some authorities, it was also felt to be important to deliver training to a multi-agency audience as a combination of services will need to work and engage with GRT communities. For example, multi-agency training was viewed as preferable to single agency training by an interviewee from one national voluntary agency delivering training, specifically because of the importance of training professionals from one agency to appreciate the impact their work has on those in other agencies.

*We prefer multi-agency training because we have found if you are considering a case study the police will appreciate the impact that their actions may have on a health visitor delivering a service.*

Others promoted the importance of multi-agency work when delivering their training. Mostly learning was through sharing ideas at multi-agency meetings and by working together on multi-agency projects. A specific example of multi-agency working in forums which was viewed as an effective opportunity for informal learning and information sharing is discussed in chapter 5.2.6, and illustrated in detail in case study F, (see Appendix 2).

## 4.2 Types of learning practices

All the authorities and training providers use a combination of formal and informal practices when delivering their training, in general it seems that informal techniques are favoured.

*We do a lot of informal training. Sometimes people think they know more than they do, and you have to get them in a much more subtle and informal way with conversations and that sort of approach.*

A national training provider

One of the training providers stated that their training was very relaxed and that there was a lot of small group work. They also noted:

*it is about encouraging a dialogue, whether you are the director of service or you are a cleaner it is about getting people talking.*

A national training provider

As good practice, and specifically to ensure that training includes a wide range of resources and can be delivered both formally and informally, one local authority ensures that their TESS trainers have all undergone trainer training.

Less formal techniques used during formal training included: general discussions, question and answer sessions with GRT adults and children, discussions around local issues and issues in the media, quizzes, and interactive sessions with resources that have been made available to Travellers. Videos and photographs of GRT communities may also be used to promote discussion during training sessions. A suggestion for

discussion groups is to include as facilitators people who have had first hand experience of working directly with GRT communities.

In one authority, it was noted that training was often delivered in an informal manner; although formal delivery was found to be more appropriate for certain audiences.

*At one time we were concerned that we weren't addressing all the learning styles, but what we find is that schools want and prefer a sit-down presentation with a focused delivery.*

A local authority respondent

Informal training might occur outside of formal training sessions, in multi-agency and partnership activities of the type discussed previously in sections 2.1.6-2.1.7. Some examples which were specifically said to offer particular opportunities for learning include: community cohesion work with school governors; shadowing of TESS professionals; promotions at conferences; outreach work; general sharing of information; and GRT specialists working with individuals in local authority services. Training opportunities may not always be recognised as such, as the following quotes indicate:

*Training can be anything, I've gone into schools in the past and offered to lay a table of resources out in the staff room and sit next to it.*

A local authority respondent

*A lot of training is done very informally through our staff going into schools and working with staff and sitting in staff rooms and chatting and being there to answer questions.*

A local authority respondent

A valuable approach was said to be linking informal training input to ongoing practice, perhaps across two or three sessions. One such approach involves offering resources to professionals and guidance in working with these resources. For example, some learning is achieved by members of the TESS working alongside professionals from other services. Interviewees in a number of authorities noted how this can be common practice while training in early years settings. When GRT children are identified as attending an early years setting, a member of the TESS may go and work alongside staff at these settings to help them to develop inclusive techniques for working with these children.

Shadowing can be an important informal learning opportunity and a number of TESS encourage staff from different services to shadow their team. In one authority the new Chief Executive and elected members have been asked to shadow their TESS. They commented that this shadowing experience was important because:

*They are given the opportunity to talk to 'real' Travellers and visit them in their communities.*

A local authority respondent

*The people they have taken out with them have gone and worked on their colleagues around Traveller issues.*

A local authority respondent

In this authority, this shadowing experience was also reported to be important for front line professionals. All new Education Welfare Officers are provided with an opportunity to spend some time with the TESS team and introductions to members of the GRT community are provided for them. Another authority provides an opportunity for police officers to shadow their TESS, and this is covered in more detail in case study D in Appendix 2 (see also sections 6.1.2 and 6.1.4 for discussion of the effectiveness of this initiative).

Informal training can also occur at local conferences. The GRT teams in a number of authorities will display their information at appropriate local authority conferences. In one authority, it was reported that a table with resources would be laid out at an SEN inclusion conference.

One authority also provides supplementary training via its website. They are creating an electronic guide in the form of a flow chart that is for professionals to use to identify best working practices to address some issues that are specific to GRT children. They also provide staff with other practical strategies and background information relating to working with GRT children and families via their website.

### **4.3 Who delivered the training?**

The majority of interviewees from local authorities that provide GRT-related training were trained teachers. Also interviewed were professionals with backgrounds in Youth Work, Education Welfare, Social Work and Early Years who were involved in training professionals to work with the GRT community. Their responses indicated that, in the local authorities involved in the study, the majority of training was

provided by individuals from Traveller Education Services or the wider Minority Ethnic Achievement services of which most TESSs are now part. Over a third of authorities questioned either had recruited members of their staff from GRT communities who delivered training or included members of these communities when delivering their training. As discussed previously in this report, many people feel that training is more successful when trainees are able to discuss issues directly with GRT individuals rather than being told about issues second hand from members of the TESS or other GRT training providers.

Working in partnership with other services or external organisations to enable learning and sharing of good practice occurred in many of the authorities we questioned. This partnership learning was more common in terms of multi-agency meetings or projects than it was in terms of actual training sessions. Specific examples of multi-agency work are discussed in more detail in chapter six which outlines good practice for working with GRT communities.

One example of working in partnership to deliver training comes from an authority which offers placements for student police officers in their TESS. Once these officers have completed their placement they then cascade their learning by presenting to their colleagues within the police service. This is discussed in more detail in the case-study section.

In another authority, the TESS worked in partnership with a voluntary organisation to undertake multi-agency training through meetings and training days. This authority also linked up with some members of the GRT community from another authority who helped to deliver the training.

Also highlighted was a creative partnership where one authority is going to work with a theatre group. This is planned for next year's GRT History Month when they will deliver cultural awareness training relating specifically to the GRT community, to school children.

In a number of authorities, it was reported that it can be difficult to gain support for training that is solely GRT related. To deliver training to wider audiences these authorities have linked their training to other events with related services or organisations or have included Gypsy/Traveller training in wider training events, such as diversity training.

So far, the report has discussed the training provided by the local authority. There are also other types of training, information and support available of the following types:

- conferences and meetings: e.g. organised by National Association of Teachers of Travellers (NATT); Shelter; DCSF
- information from websites, such as NATT and Save the Children
- Regional Consultative Groups on Traveller Education organised by TESS
- Save the Children courses
- awareness-raising trips to Gypsy/Traveller cultural events, such as fairs
- Early Years Forums
- training by e.g. The Friends and Families of Travellers; Irish Traveller movement.

#### 4.4 Services and agencies in receipt of support, information and training focusing on GRT communities

Telephone interviewees were asked to report the service areas/agencies who had undertaken training focusing on GRT communities. There was a total of 32 different agencies and services cited. These services and agencies, presented in rank order (with school staff the most frequent) are as follows.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • School staff                                     | • <i>SEN team</i>                                  |
| • Health professionals                             | • <i>Disability team</i>                           |
| • Early Years professionals                        | • <i>Foster carers</i>                             |
| • Education welfare service staff                  | • <i>Parent support advisors</i>                   |
| • Police   | • <i>Rural youth access workers*</i>               |
| • Children's centre staff                          | • <i>TESS staff</i>                                |
| • Trainee teachers / NQTs                          | • <i>Further education staff</i>                   |
| • School governors                                 | • <i>Library staff</i>                             |
| • Housing staff                                    | • <i>Youth workers</i>                             |
| • Voluntary sector staff                           | • <i>Drugs service staff*</i>                      |
| • Connexions workers                               | • <i>Prison service staff*</i>                     |
| • LA staff (none specific)                         | • <i>Youth Offending Team workers</i>              |
| • <i>Children's services staff (none specific)</i> | • <i>Crown Prosecution Service</i>                 |
| • <i>LA strategy consultants</i>                   | • <i>Fire service</i>                              |
| • <i>Adult services staff (non specific)</i>       | • <i>Every child matters board representatives</i> |
| • <i>Social care professionals*</i>                | • <i>Commission for Racial Equality staff*</i>     |

Those services and agencies highlighted in italics above were reported by one interviewee only. The number of times different services in the non-italicised group were cited ranged from 3-20. Those staff roles marked with an \* indicate those not mentioned by TESS interviewees.

Although many of the attendees of training belonged to services with a remit for children and young people, several interviewees also reported that they had delivered training to professionals working with adults (e.g. parent support advisors, adult services staff and further education staff).

Of the 20 interviewees, only four were employed by organisations other than Traveller Education (or similar) Services. These four interviewees, on the whole, reported delivering training to the same service areas/sectors as the TESS (e.g. schools, the voluntary sector; health; housing; Connexions; early years; children's centres; police; and Local Authority staff). However, there were five sectors/agencies cited only by these interviewees. These included:

- drugs service staff
- social care professionals
- rural youth access workers
- prison service staff
- commission for racial equality staff.

Although TESSs have a remit for education, the results show that they were key in the delivery of learning, information and support for professionals from a wide range of sectors working with members of the GRT community. Again, it is important to note here that interviewees were not probed specifically on the whole range of service areas/agencies that had undertaken training. Therefore, it could be that professionals from a wider range of service areas may have undertaken training than those listed above.

#### **4.5 Training and the CWDC footprint**

The CWDC has responsibility for addressing the skills of a certain section of the workforce (known as the CWDC 'footprint') who have roles in delivering services for children, young people and families. A full break down of the staff/sectors included in this 'footprint' can be found in Appendix 4. Whilst interviewees did mention attendees at training from several of the service areas included within CWDC's remit

(see section 4.4), those professionals in the footprint who were not reported as being involved in training focusing on GRT communities included:

- educational psychologists
- other therapists working with children
- portage workers (a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children and their families requiring additional support)
- Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs)
- outreach/family support workers
- learning mentors
- family court advisers
- lead inspectors of children's services
- children's home staff
- family centre workers
- day centre workers
- registered child minders
- nannies.

Of course it is likely that some professionals listed here may not commonly work with members of the GRT community. For example, due to the cultural norms of some of the GRT communities, it is perhaps rather less likely that GRT parents would use the services of professionals providing childcare than parents from other ethnic groups, as the care of children is likely to be undertaken by family members and other close members of the community. Other possibilities could be that members of the workforce from these sectors have received training from other providers not included in this study (see the section below on other organisations responsible for the delivery of training). However, the evidence here suggests that training could perhaps be extended to include at least some of these members of the children's workforce.



#### 4.6 Other organisations responsible for the delivery of training, information and support focusing on GRT communities

Some interviewees provided details of other organisations providing training, information and support to those working with children, young people and families from GRT communities. They included the following services/agencies:

- Save the Children
- A national children and families trust
- National Association of Teachers of Travellers (NATT)
- Shelter
- Commercial organisations (non specific)
- Local Authority Health boards/NHS trusts
- The Early Years Service.

There were only a small number of providers (other than TESS and the other organisations participating in this research) reported by interviewees to be delivering GRT-focused training. Where national training was referred to (e.g. conferences), it was common for interviewees to suggest that such training was expensive and as a result not widely available to the majority of the workforce. (See section 5.1.3 for barriers and challenges of training relating to cost).

#### 4.7 How training focusing on GRT communities was commissioned

Telephone interviewees were asked to report how the training/support they delivered was commissioned. Respondents highlighted that training was both requested from, and offered to, services/agencies to an equal extent. It was common for staff from TESSs and other organisation staff to approach schools with the offer of training when they became aware of a specific need. Examples included where there was a reported incidence of bullying of a GRT pupil, or when a new GRT pupil arrived at a school that had no, or little, previous experience of supporting this group. Interviewees from TESSs also reported delivering training as part of their ongoing work in schools on a more informal basis when staff were presented with a specific support need or issue.

*When a GRT pupil has been admitted into school teachers will often want individual support in the classroom. What we do is offer a menu of other services at that time... training is one, curriculum is another.*

A local authority respondent

Interviewees' responses indicated that it was more common for TESSs to offer training to schools and education professionals than other service areas/sectors although this did happen (e.g. training was offered to health practitioners by one TESS). Interviewees from TESSs also gave examples of training that had been commissioned following strategic meetings in the local authority, where staff were identified as having a specific need to develop their knowledge and skills in supporting GRT pupils. For example, in one local authority training was commissioned following a multi-agency meeting (which included an early years practitioner specialising in working with GRT pupils) to discuss the training requirements of staff working in children's centres.

One interviewee from an organisation other than the TESS reported that they had been very proactive with the police in suggesting they might benefit from some awareness-raising training. Another representative reported that it was common for training to be requested from key individuals rather than something that was policy led. S/he reported that there are often 'champions' within local authorities and other organisations who ensure that training focusing on GRT communities is on the agenda.

#### **4.8 How training focusing on GRT communities was promoted to the workforce**

A small number of interviewees commented on how the training they provided was advertised and promoted. This included:

- word of mouth
- raising awareness informally
- training promoted by TESS staff to schools
- displays at council service meetings
- flyers / promotional advertising.

Of the four interviewees from organisations other than the TESS (or similar), one reported that their organisation had advertised their training a great deal and the other reported that some marketing of their training had been conducted through flyers to all the services they wished to engage with. A few interviewees from TESSs reported delivering training as a component of general ethnic minority or diversity training to local authority staff. This training was often advertised authority wide (e.g. through

corporate training brochures and website). Methods for advertising training were felt to be limited. However this is probably to be expected given that training is not the core business for TESSs (representatives of which made up the majority of this sample) therefore time and resources may be an issue to enable staff to do this. Also, as some of the training/learning cited by interviewees was informal and ad hoc it is unlikely that it could be advertised in any formal way. The lack of formal advertising however maybe a possible reason for the low take up of training from certain sectors of the workforce who perhaps may not come into contact with the TESS.

#### 4.9 Key points

- The general themes that were covered in GRT training by local authorities and training providers included; general contextual information, the GRT community's own perspective, training tailored to specific services, practical advice, and multi-agency work .
- Just over a third of all training included some aspects that covered the GRT community's own perspective on their culture, lifestyle and other issues. In the majority of cases this type of training was provided by including members of the GRT community in the delivery of the training.
- On the whole, informal techniques for delivering training were favoured. This could be in the form of relaxed, open, discursive training sessions or outside of training sessions during outreach work, work shadowing, partnership working and attendance at more general meetings.
- The GRT training delivered by and for local authorities was generally provided by individuals from Traveller Education and Minority Ethnic Achievement services.
- Interviewees cited 32 different service areas/agencies that had undertaken training/learning focusing on GRT communities. The most commonly cited recipients of training were school staff (perhaps unsurprising, as TESS staff made up the majority of the sample). However, there were also professionals from a wide range of sectors in attendance, including, health, housing, police, Connexions, voluntary sector, early years, children's centres and education welfare.
- There were only a small number of providers (other than TESS and the other organisations participating in this research) reported by interviewees to be delivering GRT-focused training. Where national training was referred to (e.g. conferences), it was common for interviewees to suggest that such training was expensive and as a result not widely available to the majority of the workforce.
- Respondents highlighted that training was both requested from, and offered to, services/agencies to an equal extent. It was common for staff from TESSs and other training providers to approach schools with the offer of training when they became aware of a specific need. TESSs were also reported to deliver training as part of their ongoing work in schools on a more informal basis when staff presented with a specific support need or issue.

- Methods for advertising training were limited, however this is probably to be expected given that training is not the core business of the TESS (representatives of which made up the majority of this sample) and therefore staff will only have a limited amount of time and resources to dedicate to advertising. A lack of promotion and advertising resources may be a limiting factor for the awareness of the wider workforce about the availability of specialist training delivered by TESS'. However local 'champions' and their pro-activity (in some cases) helped to ensure that training focusing on GRT communities was on the particular service's agenda.

## 5. Effectiveness of training and support

### What the literature says

#### Factors contributing to successful training opportunities

- Purposes and priorities. Training appears to have suffered from having a low priority within policy and practice (Mason and Broughton, 2007; Mason *et al*, 2006). Thus, the effectiveness of training depends, in part, on clarity of purpose and priority setting.
- Changes to professional knowledge and skills. Training programmes which take a reflective approach to cultural awareness-raising and engage with controversial areas (e.g. prejudice) are recommended for some professional groups. These approaches are more likely to succeed if they are developed with strong support for trainers, with community participation, and with appropriately trained and skilled trainers (Coxhead, 2004, Derrington, 2005).
- Changes to organisations. Success factors required to achieve lasting change include strategic embedding of training/awareness-raising within broader organisational objectives, and reinforcement through training of existing best professional practice (Riches, 2007).
- Involvement of community participants. The literature suggests that involvement of community members in capacity building projects which include training can result in more well-developed networks involving Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and providers, raised expectations, greater awareness of services, empowerment of community members through experience, formation of new community groups, and greater cultural awareness among providers (Parry *et al*, 2004; McNeil *et al*, 2005; Diacon *et al*, 2007; Mason *et al*, 2006). Success factors for involving community members include acknowledging differences of power (Kiddle, 2000).
- This study has greatly extended the weak evidence base in the literature on the challenges to accessing support, training and information. For example, it has highlighted that specific issues arise concerning the *limited nature of opportunity for training* (section 5.1.1), and specifically training to work with particular GRT communities e.g. *Eastern European Roma migrants* (section 5.2.1). It also highlights funding issues, time constraints on professionals (section 5.1.1), needs for *follow-up support following training* (section 5.2.4), and for *involving GRT community members* in training (section 5.2.1).
- The study has also extended the evidence base on key factors contributing to successful training and learning opportunities. In particular, important elements for the *preparation of trainers* are identified, including those from GRT communities, and key factors outlined for ensuring the *quality of training* (section 5.2.2).
- This chapter also reports new evidence on the importance of *multi-agency training* for learning, and factors which can assist in *structuring and supporting* learning opportunities around *joint working* (section 5.2.6).

## 5.1 Barriers and challenges to accessing support, training and information

Interviewees from local authorities and other organisations providing training were asked to report if there were any issues or challenges that prevented professionals accessing support, information and training, which focused on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The barriers and challenges highlighted by interviewees could be categorised into five main areas:

- limited availability of training focusing on GRT communities
- low prioritisation of training focusing GRT communities amongst the workforce
- a lack of funding for training
- misconceptions, stereotypes and racist attitudes of some professionals
- a lack of time for professionals to attend training events.

### 5.1.1 Limited availability of training focusing on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

Just over half of the interviewees reported that a key barrier preventing professionals accessing training was the limited availability of support, information and training focusing on GRT communities.

*The key thing that would stop professionals (accessing training) would be the fact that the training courses are not being run... don't run away with the fact that it's all there to be accessed, because it's not.*

A local authority respondent

In particular, interviewees commented on the limited availability of cultural awareness training focusing on GRT communities, as well as training about Eastern European Roma migrants, and the lack of follow up support for staff following their participation in a formal training event.

In some cases, it was reported that **training focusing on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities was more widely available to certain sectors of the workforce or key personnel**. For example, some schools may be more likely to send a representative of school staff (i.e. a teacher responsible for Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) to a training event focusing on GRT communities rather than whole school staff training in this area. Although there is often the assumption that training would be cascaded to other staff, one interviewee commented that this might

not happen, thus presenting a significant barrier to wider workforce accessing information and support in relation to these communities.

Other interviewees reported that a reason for the lack of availability of training was that **GRT issues were not included in much of the wider anti racism or diversity training** commonly delivered to professionals working with children young people and families.

Another cause of the perceived lack of training, information and support available was due to the fact that Traveller Education Support (or similar) services were often the main providers of training within LAs. Due to their core remit of supporting GRT children and their families it was suggested that such teams did often not always have the necessary **capacity or time to deliver training** to the extent that is maybe required by the workforce. In addition to this, two interviewees commented that there was a lack of availability of skilled trainers with community knowledge to deliver the required training.

In three cases, interviewees (from TESS or equivalent services) felt that the limited availability of training, information and support available was due to the **lack of a coherent system for the organisation and delivery of training** of this nature, and that training was 'ad hoc' as a result. One interviewee described how due to there being no formal system for delivering GRT training in his/her authority it was difficult to identify who needed training or who had undertaken training of this nature. Furthermore, the lack of a formal system did not allow for sufficient awareness raising among service areas to promote the availability of training from the TESS. However, despite the limited capacity of some TESSs to deliver information, training and support it was the view of two TESS interviewees that TESS staff were best placed to deliver training of this nature due to their in-depth knowledge of the communities as well as the local context. This was in comparison to national training events which were perhaps unlikely to cover local issues.

### 5.1.2 Low prioritisation of training focusing on GRT communities

A further barrier reported by just over half of interviewees related to there being a low level of prioritisation among some professionals for GRT-focused training. Overall, there were two main reasons for this: (i) the ascription of the GRT community and the relevance of training focusing on this group where there were perceived to be low numbers and (ii), the lack of reference to the GRT community in strategic plans,

policies and targets. This relates to the broader issue of low prioritisation of GRT issues altogether (as previously outlined in section 3.1.4). As a result, even when training was available to the workforce sometimes take up was low.

Although there are no reliable demographic statistics, it is believed that the GRT population in the UK is roughly the size of the Bangladeshi community (Crawley 2004). However, professionals may not always identify the children, young people and families with whom they work as being from GRT communities due to **issues relating to the ascription of their ethnicity**.

*Since 2003, Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage have been identified as two distinct ethnicity groups in school census data. However, we know this data is incomplete as many parents and children are reluctant to identify themselves for fear of bullying and prejudice which is endemic in their everyday lives. This leads to policy makers, local authorities and schools not receiving the resources they are entitled to and not being made accountable for improving the life chances of Gypsy, Roma and traveller children, young people and families*

(DCSF, 2008).

Therefore, it maybe that some sectors of the workforce are reluctant to attend training due to the perception that the GRT community is not an issue for them or that other issues are a greater priority. In addition to this, one interviewee from a TESS noted that due to ascription it was difficult for TESS staff to obtain evidence to suggest to schools they needed to prioritise training. This issue is illustrated in the following comments from interviewees:

*I think priorities and people thinking that it [GRT-focused training] isn't an appropriate issue or that it is something that is low down on their priorities in their day to day work.*

A local authority respondent

*Schools have invited us in for their training days for staff and they have sometimes made workshops optional and on some occasions attendance at the Traveller workshops has been really disappointing because it is set alongside other things that people think are more of a priority.*

A local authority respondent

The second reason given for training focusing on GRT communities being a low priority for some of the workforce was due to **the perceived absence of GRT communities in the government's policy agenda for black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, as well as limited reference to these groups in some**



**services/agencies strategic plans and targets.** For example, it was suggested that where GRT communities were not embedded within schools' policies, it is difficult to get school staff to incorporate this into their training procedures. It was suggested that it was often difficult for schools to prioritise this type of training when they had other national agendas taking precedence.

Interviewees from TESS and from national voluntary organisations also referred to the fact that the wider workforce may not prioritise this training because they saw the responsibility for GRT issues residing with the TESS or similar services. Again, it was assumed that, where GRT communities were included in services plans and targets, other professionals would be more likely to see the relevancy of training. It was therefore important for TESS staff and others with expertise to operate strategically and seek to influence service target setting. As one interviewee noted:

*The aim is to actually get mainstream agencies and especially schools, to take on board that these children are actually 'their' pupils and not 'our' pupils. They are actually part of the community that is here to stay... they are one of the biggest minority ethnic groups and they could pop up at any school at any time. And it's no good the old adage of 'we've got no problem here' because in terms of challenging stereotyping, racist name calling and all that kind of preparatory work, it is vital that every school and every agency to be prepared not only for Travellers, but for any immigrant population.*

A local authority respondent

Several interviewees reported that a barrier for professionals accessing training was if the training event was entirely GRT focused. For example, it was suggested that for some schools with few GRT pupils, attending a training day entirely focused on this group may not be seen as a priority, especially where there are other competing agendas and key groups for which training is required. Here, interviewees suggested incorporating GRT training into other types of training such as inclusion or wider diversity training activities.

### **5.1.3 Limited funding for training courses**

Around a third of interviewees reported that the lack of funding available for professionals to attend training was a particular barrier. Some interviewees referred to national conferences focusing on the GRT community run by commercial organisations as being particularly expensive. In addition, where training was delivered free of charge, there was often the cost of staff cover which was an issue particularly for school staff.

Although interviewees reported that training budgets on a whole were limited (especially at local authority and school level), acquiring funding to attend training of this nature was felt to be particularly difficult. As highlighted above, given that Gypsy/Travellers may only be a small part of some professionals' role/remit and that they may not be included in service targets or policy documents, training budgets may be prioritised to other areas/key groups. One interviewee highlighted a particular difficulty for staff working with GRT communities accessing training in that much of the project work is short term funded and therefore some employers may not wish to invest in staff development due to the temporary nature of such projects.

#### **5.1.4 Misconceptions, stereotypes and racist attitudes of some professionals**

Around a third of interviewees commented that a barrier to accessing training information and support was related to the attitudes of the professionals themselves (as discussed earlier in relation to professional practice in section 3.1.6). For example, two interviewees reported that some professionals would not attend training focussing on GRT communities because they assumed they already had sufficient knowledge of these communities despite much of it perhaps being based on limited interaction with GRT communities and/or common misconceptions about them. It was suggested that where this is the case, a more informal approach to training and support should be undertaken so that learning is provided in a more 'subtle way'.

Other interviewees suggested that personal prejudice and negative stereotypes of GRT communities, particularly those portrayed by the media may prevent some members workforce attending training (where training was voluntary).

*I think personal prejudice [prevents colleagues accessing support training and information] because people will tend to avoid something if it goes against their own personal gains.*

A local authority respondent

Indeed, one interviewee spoke of there being an 'institutional green light to be racist against these communities' more than for any other ethnic minority, which was a significant challenge in the uptake and delivery of training.

### 5.1.5 Lack of time to attend training events

Five interviewees suggested that time was a key barrier for professionals wishing to access support, training and information in respect of GRTs. This included the lack of time on the part of professionals to undertake training as well as TESS (or equivalent staff such as Liaison Officers if they are well-trusted by local GRT communities) to deliver training in addition to their core duties and responsibilities.

Many of the comments on the challenges relating to the lack of time professionals had to attend training pertained to school staff. For example, a few interviewees spoke of challenges in relation to the length of time often required to organise the delivery of training in schools. Others spoke of the difficulties of teachers attending training due to lack of release time. With other services the problem was said to be that many professionals gave this training a low priority with competing pressures on their time, and not many managers were encouraging them to attend.

Two representatives from TESS also spoke of the difficulty of delivering training in addition to their wider role and that lack of time had prevented them from delivering training to professionals in the way they would like. For example, one interviewee noted that their service had merged with the ethnic minorities team and within the local authority and that this had resulted in less time for staff to deliver training. This may be an issue for Traveller education support staff in the future, if the merging of services/teams becomes more common practice.

## 5.2 Factors contributing to successful training and learning opportunities

Interviews included an exploration of respondents' views of what factors contribute to successful training and opportunities for learning for professionals working with children, young people and families from GRT communities. A number of key themes were raised, which are examined in the following sub-sections. These themes included:

- involving GRT community members in training
- ensuring the quality of training
- attuning training to specific contexts
- focusing on attitudes, awareness and practice
- creating opportunities for reflection
- taking account of the importance of multi-agency work

- ensuring strategic support from local authorities and a more integrated approach.

### 5.2.1 Involving GRT community members in training

As indicated in section 4.1.2, a key factor for success in training was said by several respondents to consist of involving members of the GRT communities. According to one respondent, representing a national voluntary organisation which delivers training to a range of recipients including local authority staff, health workers, social workers and teachers, success had been achieved through having Gypsies and Travellers *leading* the training. The GRT trainers work in teams and include young people recruited from the local community as well as experienced trainers. One local authority also highlighted that a key success factor involves consideration of generational issues and compatibility. For example, in one project, which involved training adults who work with young people, the trainers were young people from GRT communities, supported by older people.

Involving GRT community members helps with the process of dismantling preconceptions, according to another national voluntary sector provider:

*People have this idea about what Gypsies and Travellers are and when they meet Gypsies and Travellers it breaks down so many barriers.*

A national training provider

Good preparation is necessary so that the trainers from GRT communities know their roles. Planning involves taking account of risk factors – involving Travellers in training requires careful preparation as in some circumstances conflict may arise. For example, in some circumstances, the training can include racist or aggressive questioning that might make the Travellers feel uncomfortable if they have not been trained in how to deal with those issues. The attributes of patience, persistence and resilience, in the face of conflicting values, which were discussed in section 2.1.5 in relation to professional practice, are also relevant to trainers. A factor in success is how well the GRT trainers have been prepared or trained themselves. On one case study visit (see case study B, Appendix 2) where a training session for professionals working with Roma communities was observed as part of the research project, it was emphasised that a long-term goal would be to include Roma trainers playing a leading role, but that this requires supporting them to develop expertise for delivering high quality training to others. One national voluntary sector provider developed accreditation for trainers from diverse communities, covering such issues as understanding body language and dealing with aggressive questioning. Where young

people from GRT communities deliver training, success depends on very careful preparation in advance with adult guidance.

In some local authorities, members of GRT communities are employed within services, for example within the TESS. This can be an advantage in the delivery of training events, since the Travellers already have professional expertise and understandings of service issues as well as knowledge of specific GRT communities. They are also well positioned to train other Traveller adults and young people to be involved in training events.

If a GRT community member could not be directly involved in delivering training, it was felt to be important to include the community voice somehow, for example on visual media such as DVD.

*It [DVD] is a powerful medium to use because ultimately I am not a Traveller, I am a trainer in Traveller issues.*

A local authority respondent

### **5.2.2 Ensuring the quality of training**

It was stated that a key factor in success is ensuring that the training is of a high standard in terms of pedagogy. Well-considered, step-by-step planning, with consultations between the trainer and the commissioning service, should lead to achieving a careful match between expectations and delivery. It is important that training sessions should be well-structured and sequenced and attuned to the audience, as with any other professional training sessions. For example, both the deliverer and recipients of training for professionals working with Roma communities commented that key factors in success included the high quality of the presentational content, the opportunities for networking that were created, and the group work component which was focused on discussion of case studies drawn from real life scenarios (see case study B, Appendix 2).

### **5.2.3 Attuning training to specific contexts**

An important factor in successful training for working with GRT communities is attuning it to the circumstances and needs of particular groups undertaking the training. This would of course also be important for training in other areas. To ensure that training is relevant to specific professional needs, one recommended approach is to identify those needs and expectations in advance, for example through the use of

questionnaires. Those professionals undertaking training can submit questions that they would like to have answered, and explain why they think the training is important for them. According to an interviewee from one national voluntary agency, by ascertaining professionals' expectations in advance of or at the start of a session, it is possible to work with them in training and to address any unrealistic expectations. It is also important to tailor starting times and to arrange a location well-suited to the specific needs of professionals expecting to attend.

A significant aspect of ensuring that training is relevant to the contexts in which professionals work is to include practice-related activities. Case studies were said to be important factors in successful training if they enable those attending to reflect on actual experiences. An example of an approach to training which included case studies was the training session for professionals working with Roma communities, (see case study B, Appendix 2). Here the session was structured in two main parts. The first part involved a well-structured, in-depth presentation of information about the Roma community. The presentation highlighted the diversity of communities' histories and the complex causes of the prevalent current situation of disadvantage and social exclusion for many Roma communities. The second part then involved small group work on case studies. The aim was that professionals from different backgrounds should work in small groups to consider cases concerning Roma families which were presented to them. They would carry out two main tasks, to:

- identify key issues related to their professional work in the cases and how to address these
- identify which professionals would take leading roles in addressing the issues.

The rationale for putting professionals from different backgrounds together would be to ensure that different perspectives were shared and multi-agency solutions were developed.

Another interviewee stated that when training teachers, it was very effective to arrange a series of training sessions and link them to the ongoing work of individual teachers in class, to give it 'a coherence and validity as far as teachers are concerned'. The view here was that training does not embed learning so effectively if it is a one-off session. Two different local authority TESS respondents also noted that activities which involve participation by professionals together in shared projects which meet a local need, for example, production of resources such as a CD-Rom, provide a very good focus for effective formal or informal learning.

An example of informal learning arising from a resource production project involves the creation of a book 'Come and Count with Us' for outreach work, and later a CD-Rom version of the same materials to be used with interactive whiteboards, as a classroom resource, (see case study E, Appendix 2 for further details). The project arose from a partnership involving a local authority TESS, Early Years Service and ICT services, and members of the local GRT community, and was initially designed to meet a local need for suitable resources for early years service family outreach work. The project supported informal learning both for co-participants during its production (e.g. the ICT consultant learned about working with GRT communities) and for those who then used the resources for outreach, in primary school classrooms, and in children's centres. The project was reported to have shaped knowledge and awareness, attitudes and practice in a number of ways:

- knowledge of the GRT community was acquired through professionals and GRT family members working together, e.g. knowledge of terminology, travel patterns, and land use
- attitudes of some professionals towards GRT communities were changed for the better
- the resource was used in schools and early years centres across the country and thereby provided an exemplary model of the potential for producing and sharing such resources
- the resource which GRT families had helped to produce, and which contained very positive images of them, also had an enhancing impact on GRT communities' self-confidence.

Key factors in the success of this project in supporting learning and enhancing practice that were identified included:

- Processes of learning. There were various stages of learning through the resource production, including discussion around images to include, involving GRT children in person, and meeting GRT families on the site, and discussion with work partners around the production tasks.
- Funding and publicity. Adequate funding was made available and the project recovered costs through national sales.
- Quality. The quality of the product was an important factor in its popularity and success and partners learnt together through ensuring quality.
- Organisational support. The TESS leader found that the Early Years group provided a wider home for joint work, and a supportive context for reciprocal work, within the broader inclusion agenda.
- Contextual relevance. Learning occurred through the process of partners working together to ensure that the book stood out as attractive and relevant to the needs of outreach workers, GRT families, and children's centre

practitioners, and that the CD fitted with wider school agendas e.g. working with interactive whiteboards.

The importance of providing training for both trainees and experienced professionals was also emphasised. The most successful approaches to training new entrants to a profession might be different to those approaches which are most successful with experienced practitioners. Whereas experienced practitioners may especially benefit from embedding training within ongoing practice, this approach might need to be modified for new entrants. For example, for trainees, an effective approach was said to involve focusing initially on personal racism and prejudice issues, then analysing reasons for any underachievement of GRT children, and then moving forward to focus on implications for good practice.

Making training relevant to the particular histories, circumstances and needs of local GRT communities was also said to be an important success factor. This could most obviously be achieved by involving GRT participants in training, as discussed above, but some respondents felt, regardless, that it was important for training to include history, explain differences between different groups, and help those attending to understand issues to do with terminology. It was strongly emphasised by the trainer on one case-study visit that first-hand experience of trainers in working with particular GRT communities is a key ingredient in successful training (see case study B, Appendix 2).

#### **5.2.4 Focusing on attitudes, awareness and practice**

The importance of open-minded attitudes and of self-awareness to professionals' practice was discussed in chapter 2, section 2.1.5. These attributes may not be equally present in all professionals, but can be encouraged through training. Among the factors underpinning successful training, an important consideration is that more effective practice can result from supporting practitioners to be more open-minded, and to develop relationships with GRT family members more successfully. It was suggested by respondents that, to this end, the content of training should involve reflecting on actual experience, questioning negative stereotypes, understanding stress factors impacting on individuals, families and communities, and exploring variations between and within Traveller communities.

Some TESS respondents felt that personalising training for participating individuals was a very important factor in success. Training could be much richer if trainers



understand where the individual participants are coming from, including their professional remit and experiences, and establish a 'personal relationship' with them. Skilled trainers could then guide participants through their own feelings and attitudes, help to make communities real to them, and support them to change their own practice. It was felt that training events could be a starting point for enduring professional contacts or networking between trainers and those professionals participating, through trainers making themselves available for further consultation:

*... it is really crucial to build this personal relationship with people you are training as you are more likely to make a long-term impact.*

A local authority respondent

However, it was also felt to be a challenge for trainers to follow up on training unless resources are directly explicitly for this purpose. TESS trainers for example have to concentrate on the work of their service, and whilst they have partnerships in place for following up with school staff, this is not usually the case with other professionals. Underpinning this dilemma is the strategic issue of future direction for TESS services, for example considering options for greater integration with children's services at locality level.

### **5.2.5 Creating opportunities for reflection**

Given the important influence of professionals' attitudes and self-awareness on practice, providing opportunities for participants to reflect on what they are experiencing is considered to be an important factor for effective training. Within training sessions, it was said that an interactive and participatory approach, using visual material from GRT families and sharing personal experiences, and building in time for questions and discussion could support reflection. The use of positive images could be used to stimulate reflection about the way in which media images affect professionals' and others' attitudes.

Broadly, whilst having TESS specialists working alongside practitioners is considered a good way of influencing practice, at the same time it is seen as valuable for professionals and volunteers to have an opportunity to come out of their work setting and reflect on their work. A considered view is that if there is to be training through partnership working, people need to be aware that this is viewed as an informal training experience, and to be able to 'take some time to reflect and learn from these experiences. This reflection could be better through some kind of formal training'. This strategic approach to the learning potential of shared practice seems to resonate

well with the need to provide personalised, experientially-based and reflective learning opportunities for professionals, many of whom may have little first-hand knowledge of Travellers, and who may at first bring to the situation some of the assumptions and attitudes of wider society.

### **5.2.6 Taking account of the importance of multi-agency work**

With the increased recognition of the importance of multi-agency working, there is particular interest in what makes multi-agency training successful.

Training can be structured around developing and synchronising procedures for joint working. An example of this occurred in training for professionals working with Roma communities in one local authority. Here, the rationale for putting professionals from different backgrounds together for case-study discussions was to ensure that different perspectives were shared and multi-agency solutions were developed.

This approach within training can be a prelude to regular further meetings to discuss topics between participants. One recipient of training commented that she had taken learning forward by tabling regular agenda items at team meetings for further discussion (see case study B, Appendix 2). One successful approach to linking training with team work integrates multi-agency training with ‘procedural’ working groups that develop data collection and sharing systems together.

An example of effective informal training arises from the work of multi-agency forums in one local authority (see case study F, Appendix 2). Here, the majority of learning and knowledge-sharing in relation to working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities occurs at multi-agency meetings. There are three different multi-agency forums that meet. There is a strategic-level forum, a front line workers forum (called the social inclusion forum) and also a forum for members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Learning occurred through these forums in the following areas:

- developing an understanding of each other’s roles
- learning more about local families/issues
- building their knowledge of the communities, and how to approach these communities
- breaking down misconceptions
- developing good practice by learning from other people’s experiences,

- learning about the wider work of the other services and organisations that attend the meetings.

Among the success factors underpinning the learning opportunities that were said by forum attendees to be facilitated at the social inclusion forum, key ingredients include:

- **Informality and openness.** The meetings have an informal atmosphere and everyone is able to openly contribute to discussion. People who attend are broad minded - they openly engage with each other and are willing to take on board what others say.
- **Reciprocity.** It is better to learn from discussion with other people. Learning is shared.
- **Inclusiveness.** As the meetings have become more successful more different services have attended.

### 5.2.7 Ensuring support from local authorities and a more integrated approach

The commitment of those delivering training was said to be a key factor underpinning success – ‘it is the enthusiasm of the deliverer’; ‘the commitment and passion of the trainer’. Several respondents made it clear that the sustained personal commitment of specialists (e.g. TESS staff) had been instrumental in ensuring that effective training occurred. This report also provided evidence that, alongside this commitment, a more strategic approach is needed to achieve greater effectiveness in terms of reach within and across services, and impact on practice. The preparation of trainers has already been discussed in the context of GRT community members’ training needs, and it seems clear that many specialists who deliver training have had little or no formal training to train, but instead draw on their extensive practice experiences, their learning through networks and forum participation, and their commitment.

It was strongly emphasised that a more strategic approach involves linking the training that is done by specialists such as TESS team members with wider training agendas to ensure that whole-service equalities policies are implemented in relation to working with GRT communities. In education, it was said to be valuable to ensure that practitioners attend training, by integrating the training with training programmes and conference days concerned with learning support and ethnic minority service (EMS) sessions. It is considered important to encourage service leaders to incorporate training within service development plans. The national training providers also stressed that success has come from taking a more integrated approach i.e. through

mainstreaming training into anti-racist training, although there is felt to be much to achieve in this direction.

It was stressed by national trainers and local authority providers that, for training to be successful on a national scale in affecting practice across the breadth of the children's workforce, there needs to be substantial strategic commitment through:

- support for training at local authority leadership and government levels
- publication of practice guidance
- funding for training and resource provision
- consistency of provision and support across all regions.

To raise commitment and capacity at local authority levels, an approach recommended as successful by a national voluntary sector organisation involves specialists from national organisations working alongside local authority strategists to develop their strategies, resources and reports. It was felt that co-working could result in greater learning than formal training in this context.

## 5.3 Key points

### Barriers and challenges to accessing support, training and information

- Just over half of interviewees reported that a key barrier preventing professionals accessing training was the limited availability of support, information and training focussing on GRT communities.
- The availability of cultural awareness training, training on Eastern European Roma migrants, and the provision of follow up support for staff following their participation in a formal training event was felt to be especially limited.
- In some cases, it was reported that GRT-focused training was more widely available to certain sectors of the workforce or key personnel (e.g. teachers with an ethnic minority remit than whole school staff).
- Gypsy/Traveller issues were not included in much of the wider anti racism or diversity training commonly delivered to professionals working with children young people and families, which limited the extent to which professionals could access training focussing on this group.
- Due to their core remit of supporting TGR children and their families it was suggested that some TESSs may not have necessary capacity or time to deliver training to the extent that is perhaps required. The lack of a coherent system for the organisation and delivery of training of this nature meant that training was at times 'ad hoc'.

- Over half of interviewees related to there being a low level of prioritisation among some professionals for GRT-focused training, which meant that even when training was available, take-up was low. One of the reasons for this related to the ascription of GRT communities and the relevance of training focusing on a group where there was a perception of low numbers. The other reason related to the lack of reference to the GRT community in strategic plans, policies and targets.
- A perceived barrier to some of the workforce accessing training, information and support related to the attitudes of some professionals. Including assumptions based on limited interaction with the GRT community as well as personal prejudice and negative stereotypes (particularly those portrayed by the media).
- Time was a barrier for professionals wishing to access support, training and information focusing on GRT communities. This included the lack of time on the part of professionals to undertake training as well as TESS (or equivalent staff) to deliver training in addition to their core duties and responsibilities.

### Factors contributing to successful training and learning opportunities

Interviewees' views on the factors that make training successful for practitioners who work with children, young people and families from GRT communities included:

- **Involving GRT community members in training.** One key factor for success in training was said by several respondents to involve inclusion of members of the GRT communities. Good preparation is necessary so that the trainers from GRT communities know their roles. Members of GRT communities who are employed in teams e.g. TESS teams are also well positioned to train other Traveller adults and young people to be involved in training events.
- **Ensuring the quality of training.** A key factor in success is ensuring that the training is of a high standard in terms of pedagogy, well-planned with consultation, and delivered in a carefully structured, sequenced and interactive manner.
- **Attuning training to specific contexts.** An important factor in successful training is to identify the needs and expectations of participants in advance. It is also important to link the training context to practice e.g. across a series of sessions.
- **Focusing on attitudes, awareness and practice.** More effective practice can result from supporting practitioners to be open-minded and to build relationships with GRT family members more successfully.
- **Creating opportunities for reflection.** Providing opportunities for participants to reflect on what they are experiencing is considered to be an important factor in effective training. If there is to be a strategy of training professionals through partnership working, it is advised to make people aware that this partnership work is viewed as an informal training experience, and to provide some time to reflect and learn from these experiences.
- **Taking account of the importance of multi-agency work.** Multi-agency training has the advantage of supporting participants to learn more about each others' work, and learning has usefully been structured around developing and synchronising procedures for joint working.

- **Ensuring strategic support from local authorities and a more integrated approach.** It was emphasised that, for training to be successful in achieving strategic goals of supporting more integrated practice, there should be stronger support at leadership level within local authorities.

## 6. Impacts of training/learning

### What the literature says

- There is a lack of evaluation of training or evidence of what works and for whom in the literature.
- More research has been done on identifying and modelling impacts than actually measuring impacts.
- Positive impacts of training programmes can include changes to individuals' knowledge, skills and understanding e.g. over Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families' support needs, the time required to meet these, and ability to transfer learning to the workplace (Coxhead, 2004). A key dimension of impact on organisations which has been identified in the literature concerns the aspiration towards *mainstreaming* of work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities i.e. ensuring that the work is an integral part of the systematic consideration of the particular effects of all policies and practices on disadvantaged groups. However there is no evidence that ad-hoc training of individuals leads to organisational change.
- This chapter reports fresh evidence of actual impacts of training on professionals' *knowledge* of GRT communities; *awareness of support* services and procedures (section 6.1.1); changes in *values* and *attitudes* (section 6.1.2).
- The chapter also provides new evidence of impact on professionals' *practice*, in areas such as: development of more appropriate *resources* (section 6.1.3); more appropriate approaches to *interaction* (section 6.1.3); *sharing of knowledge* gained with others including children, parents and other professionals (section 6.1.4).
- There are indications of potential for training or learning (e.g. through multi-agency work) of individual professionals to be *passed on within organisations* (section 6.1.4) if appropriate strategic approaches are in place (as discussed previously in section 5.2.7).
- This chapter also provides new evidence that members of the *GRT community* who completed training to enable them to effectively deliver training to professionals reported increased *confidence* about their ability to deliver training, increased *self-esteem*, and *positivity* about their capabilities (section 6.1.6). Involvement of GRT community members in learning events appeared to have potential for facilitating *benefits for GRT communities* e.g. that members felt more equal, accepted and valued (section 6.1.5).

The chapter provides an overview of the impacts resulting from participation in training/learning focusing on GRT communities, drawing on the views of interviewees in each of the six case studies.

## 6.1 Overview of impacts of training/learning opportunities focusing on GRT communities

Interviewees highlighted a range of impacts as a result of participating in training/learning focusing on GRT communities. The main impacts from the training/learning included:

- increased knowledge, understanding and awareness
- changes in perception and values
- improved working practices and service provision
- wider dissemination of learning
- benefits for GRT pupils and families
- benefits for members of the GRT community delivering training

This chapter provides examples from each of the case studies in relation to each of the areas of impact highlighted. Accounts of each case study are presented in Appendix 2.

### 6.1.1 Increased knowledge, understanding and awareness

One of the most commonly cited impacts of the training/learning across the case studies was the increased knowledge, understanding and awareness of participants. This included (i) increased knowledge of GRT communities and (ii) an increased awareness of support services and local procedures.

#### (i) Increased knowledge of GRT communities

Interviewees in the case-study phase reported a number of ways in which the training/learning had affected professionals in their knowledge of GRT communities. This included a greater insight into the issues faced by members of the GRT community, a greater understanding of GRT culture, increased knowledge of good practice in establishing relationships/trust with GRT families, and greater awareness of local issues and concerns of the community. Interviewees particularly noted impact in terms of increased knowledge and understanding of GRT communities as a result of working with them or receiving training which involved members of GRT communities. For example, attendees of a course specifically for Teaching Assistants (TAs) (see case study A) felt that their **understanding of GRT communities had developed** due to the discussions they had with members of the community during training. They spoke about having a greater understanding of why it can be difficult for GRT pupils to complete homework. Instead of disciplining the pupils for



not submitting homework, staff now offer lunchtime support sessions to enable them to complete their homework in school time.

In addition, the increase in knowledge of GRT communities that resulted for professionals from attending a multi agency forum was highlighted in case study F. Here service representatives **shared experiences relating to working with GRT communities, and fed back on current issues in the local community and ways to address them**. One interviewee noted, ‘you can always learn from the forum as you can never have done everything yourself’ (a forum attendee).

#### **(ii) Increased awareness of support services and local procedures**

Improved knowledge of local policies and guidance relating to GRT communities as well as better insight into the roles of service staff working with them was a further impact of the training/learning. For example, a training session delivered to student police officers by TESS Traveller Liaison staff (see case study D) was felt to have brought trainee officers ‘up to speed’ with the local authority’s policies and approaches to support for GRT communities. It was suggested that the impact of the training was that officers had an **increased awareness of procedures** relating to GRT community members (e.g. a knowledge of the local authority’s protocol for unauthorised encampments) which officers would be required to adhere to in the future. There was also felt to be **a greater awareness of services involved in the local partnership dealing with the GRT community** and of particular staff roles.

In a similar vein, the increased knowledge that was reported to have occurred at the multi-agency meeting (see case study F) involved: developing a greater understanding of the roles of other professionals; developing a greater knowledge of the wider work of other services/organisations in relation to attendance; learning from others’ experiences regarding how to approach GRT communities; and, breaking down misconceptions by sharing each other’s knowledge. There was also shared learning within and between forums in the local authority (e.g. strategic, front-line and community forums) which had a positive impact on knowledge sharing.

### **6.1.2 Changes in perceptions and values**

Some interviewees described how the knowledge gained through the training/learning they had experienced had led to a change in their own perceptions of GRT communities. For example, an ICT consultant in case study E (which involved the production of resources to support GRT-focused outreach work) admitted to having

some prejudices towards GRT communities prior to working on the project and, through co-working sessions with GRT community members to develop the resources, reported that his/her **concept of the GRT community** had become more positive.

There was also evidence of **impact on attitudes towards GRT communities among colleagues of those who participated in the training/learning**. For example, in case study D (which involved a student police officer shadowing members of the TESS and Traveller Liaison team), fellow students of the officer were said to be initially pleased they had not been given a Traveller placement, reportedly perceiving it to be the least worthwhile. Following a presentation delivered by the student officer to his/her colleagues about his experiences of the placement, they commented that they now wanted to visit a Traveller site.

### 6.1.3 Changes in practice: improved working practices and service provision

Other impacts cited by interviewees in the case study phase of the research included actual changes in practice as a result of the knowledge and skills gained from the training/learning. For example, interviewees involved in the training course for Teaching Assistants (see case study A) spoke about the **development of culturally appropriate resources**, as well as the development of lesson plans that were more applicable to GRT pupils and of opportunities that were culturally more relevant to GRT children.

In another authority (case study F), informal learning around GRT communities as part of a multi agency forum had led to **an impact on how professionals interacted with members of the community**. In one instance, a police service representative brought it to the attention of other forum members, that there were tensions among GRT communities about a monitoring scheme that had been introduced. This has affected practice in terms with how services deal with any areas of tension of which they become aware.

The training delivered to members of the PCT by TESS staff (see case study B) was felt by the trainer to have led to a more informal and confident approach to working with GRT communities through the dismantling of stereotypes and addressing fears. The recipient of the training gave an example of the impact on her practice in that s/he

now **routinely ‘shook hands’ with community members to overcome a history of discrimination** which included treating Roma as ‘untouchable’.

Finally, in case study D, a student police officer who shadowed the work of the TESS and Traveller liaison staff felt that, although s/he was not yet operational, the placement had **shaped the way s/he would interact with GRT communities in the future**. For example, after visiting GRT sites and talking to families, the officer found that there was some reluctance from GRT community members to speak to the police. However, s/he recognised that this reluctance possibly came from the approach of the police when visiting sites (e.g. driving on to the site in police vehicles when there was a problem rather than making regular visits to sites on foot to build community relations). Building up rapport was said to be important, ‘so that the next time you go they recognise you as the community police officer – that was a biggie for me’ (Student police officer).

The officer also found from his/her time spent on sites that, when there were no males from the GRT communities present, female members may be reluctant to talk to a police officer. The officer reported that s/he would now ensure that, wherever possible, s/he would approach a site when there was a male present. Rather than thinking GRT community members were being difficult, the officer now felt that s/he understood the reasons behind the lack of engagement. This was believed to be particularly important, as the officer will be part of a safer neighbourhood team where s/he will have a key role in building relationships within the community.

Interviewees in case study F felt that, due to the networks and relationships they had developed through attendance at a multi-agency forum, they could now **provide a much more professional service**. As a result of their increased awareness and understanding of the roles of service staff attending those meetings, they were **able to provide a more responsive approach** to GRT community members requiring support from other services as they felt they could now quickly signpost to the appropriate person in the appropriate service.

#### 6.1.4 Wider dissemination of learning

In some case studies, interviewees reported that they had shared the knowledge they gained from training/learning with others.

In case study A, Teaching Assistants noted that an additional impact of the projects they worked on as part of their training course was the **increased awareness of GRT communities among a wider audience**. For example, one TA reported that the performance and the display created as part of the project work had been presented to the whole school and to parents.

Those participating in the multi-agency forum (see case study F) also reported examples where learning from the group was being shared more widely. Many attendees reported feeding back **information from the meetings to their management and colleagues**. For example, one forum member commented that the knowledge gained by the police officer representative at the forum will be shared more formally and that they intended to deliver cultural awareness training to officers who work the local beats as a result.

In case study D the student police officer who shadowed TESS and Traveller liaison staff was required as part of his/her placement to **share his/her experiences with other trainee officers and senior staff**. S/he gave an oral presentation on the history of GRT communities, the differences between groups, and his/her experience of the placement in terms of appropriate ways of interacting with GRT communities. There were wider impacts on his/her fellow student officers as well as senior staff in attendance. For example, the training officer who attended the presentation reported impacts on his/her own understanding of good practice in working with the community, which s/he had never previously considered. (See section 6.1.2 on changes in perceptions and values for further details).

### 6.1.5 Benefits for GRT pupils and families

Some interviewees in the case studies also noted **wider impacts of their training/learning on GRT pupils, families and the wider community**. For example, the projects carried out by TAs as part of their training (see Appendix 2, case study A) were felt to have had a number of benefits for the GRT pupils involved. These included: the opportunity to 'show' their community in a positive light; increased confidence; greater engagement in learning; and, improved school attendance.

In case study E, where staff worked on the production of an early years book and CD-Rom, it was reported that there was excitement among the GRT community members involved as a result of seeing their own community represented in mainstream

educational resources. The GRT family that contributed to the book also felt that there was a wide impact across the country. They reported that friends and relatives in other parts of the country had commented that the book was in use at schools attended by their children. It was also felt to be positive that GRT pupils were involved in something with status in the mainstream. The impact on the community was that members felt more equal, accepted and valued. As one community member noted, the impact was ‘making you feel special really, that you are someone in Britain and not just stinking (sic) Gypsies’.

### 6.1.6 Benefits for GRT trainers

Members of the GRT community who completed skills training to enable them to effectively deliver GRT-related training to professionals (see Appendix 2, case study C) talked about having increased confidence, not only in relation to their capacity to deliver training, but also in terms of their increased self esteem and positivity about their own capabilities. They reported that participating in the course had led them to enrolling on basic skills and computer courses – something they would not have considered before. As one learner noted:

*I found it empowering because I was a really shy person... your confidence grew each time, but you have to go past your comfort zone, it is all about going past your safe barrier.*

## 6.2 Key points

- One of the most commonly cited impacts of the training/learning across the case studies was the increased knowledge, understanding and awareness of participants. This included an increased knowledge of GRT communities and increased awareness of support services and local procedures.
- Some interviewees described how the knowledge gained through the training/learning they had experienced had led to a change in their own perceptions of GRT communities. There was also evidence of impact on attitudes towards GRT communities among colleagues of those who participated in the training/learning when sharing of knowledge occurred.
- Professionals reported changes in practice as a result of the knowledge and skills gained from the training/learning. This included for example, the development of culturally appropriate resources and more appropriate approaches to interaction with community members.
- In some case studies, interviewees reported that they had shared the knowledge they gained from training/learning with others. This included pupils, parents and other professionals.

- Members of the GRT community who completed skills training to enable them to effectively deliver GRT-related training to professionals reported increased confidence in relation to their capacity to deliver training, increased self-esteem and positivity about their own capabilities.

## 7. Implications

The study has highlighted a number of important issues in relation to training and support for those working with GRT communities, from which implications can be drawn for future policy and practice.

The limited amount of research literature on the subject supports the value of a more formal sharing of practice. A larger collection of detailed case studies could feasibly be collated and published. Formal evaluations of training programmes and initiatives could be more widely available in order to assess impact and quality (this could include external reviews as well as internal monitoring procedures).

It seems evident that TESSs have developed good practice in training but there is now a need for more equitable sharing of responsibility. Rather than continuing to take the lead in this alone, TESSs could pursue a partnership approach with other professionals in the joint planning and delivery of training in order to disseminate good practice.

As well as sharing information and developing policy matters, multi-agency meetings could specifically include, within their terms of reference, the requirement to discuss and collectively address professionals' training needs with regard to working with GRT communities at the local level. This could include a range of activities such as jointly published training materials, planning of local (and less expensive) conference events, the establishment of job shadowing initiatives, work placements etc. A collaborative approach such as this could help to address the current ad hoc nature of training reported by interviewees and may even help to attract financial support from the Local Authority in subsidising training costs.

In addition, training provision could be further extended in order to capture a wider range of services. This study suggests those within the CWDC footprint that do not appear to regularly access training in relation to GRT communities include educational psychologists, therapeutic workers, portage workers, Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs), family court advisers, family centre workers, and children's home staff.

The value of training that is provided directly by members of the GRT community was highlighted many times in the literature and by interviewees. With effective levels of support and training for the GRT trainers themselves, this approach can

facilitate open and meaningful dialogue and can more effectively dispel deep-seated stereotyped beliefs than if delivered by non-Travellers. This suggests that more GRT trainers could be recruited (and accredited) across a wider range of services. This need not be restricted to formal modes of delivery, and any accreditation will need to take account of GRT communities' traditions. It could include more informal interpretations of training. In addition, DVD resources featuring the community voice could be held centrally for all services to access.

Historical and political knowledge about the treatment of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in policy matters and practice helps to place current issues in context and therefore encourages a deeper understanding of the predicament these communities may face. For example, an understanding of the legislative impact on site provision challenges the popular assumption that Gypsies and Travellers choose to trespass on private property.

Training can recognise and promote the heterogeneous nature of Traveller communities. Including training as part of a wider, diversity agenda goes some way in recognising this. Professionals with responsibility for induction and/or diversity training in all services should ensure that GRT community issues are incorporated and embedded – this should help to access a wider target audience. This also applies to Race Equality Councils.

However, while it is important to raise awareness of particular cultural aspects, this focus can pathologise communities and actually perpetuate notions of 'otherness'. Trainers may also need to consider drawing greater attention therefore to the similarities and universality of human need including psychological factors such as self respect, the need for safety and a desire for social acceptance.

Training can usefully include a discussion or focus on attitudes and values as these drive even the most subtle forms of professionals' behaviour. Those being trained could be encouraged to reflect upon their own beliefs in relation to issues such as family loyalty, perceptions of childhood and adulthood and aspects of morality (for example sexual behaviour, substance abuse etc). This could help trainees to recognise common principles and shared aims.



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## Appendix 2: Case Studies

The case studies provide the following examples of training/learning activities:

- **Teaching Assistant (TA) training course (case study A)**
- **training session focusing on the Roma community delivered via presentation to members of the Primary Care Trust (PCT) (case study B)**
- **a training course presentation and listening skills for members of GRT communities to enable them deliver training/learning to professionals working with GRT communities (case study C)**
- **trainee police officer training delivered by a training session and a TESS work shadowing placement (case study D)**
- **informal learning through the production of resources to support outreach work with GRT communities (case study E)**
- **informal learning and knowledge sharing around the GRT community though multi-agency forum meetings (case study F)**

## Accounts of training and learning opportunities

### Case study A: Training provided by an authority's Race Equality and Diversity Service

This case study contains examples of one authority's training for professionals who work with adults and children from Gypsy/Traveller communities. The first in-depth example outlines the experiences of two teaching assistants (TAs) who attended a course for those working with Gypsy/Traveller children. Following this, four shorter examples outline further training opportunities provided by the Race Equality and Diversity Service. The first two of these relate to participants' views of training delivered by the service to Teacher Trainees and to Education Welfare Officers. The second two examples focus on the views of an Early Years Professional and a TA from the Irish Traveller community involved in delivering training for the service.

#### Example 1: Teacher Assistant (TA) Training

##### THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

This example focuses on a training course provided by the authority's Race Equality & Diversity Service specifically for Teaching Assistants (TAs) working with Gypsy/Traveller children and is an account of the views of two TAs who attended this course.

The learning aims of the TAs who attended the course were:

- To develop a better insight into the background of Gypsy/Travellers
- To learn about the problems faced by the Gypsy/Traveller community
- To practice and learn new techniques for working with Gypsy/Traveller children

The course was run over two days with a month in between these days during which the teaching assistants completed a project in their school. The two days of training with the Race Equality and Diversity Service involved a mixture of formal presentations, discussion groups, brainstorming and less formal periods for reflection and discussion of ideas.

The TAs reported that several topics were covered, including; racism issues, lifestyle and culture, issues around distance learning, national strategies, information about the Race Equality and Diversity service, ideas on how to engage Gypsy/Traveller parents, learning from other professionals who work with Gypsy/Travellers, practical advice for Teaching Assistants to work with Gypsy/Traveller children, and time to explore and familiarise themselves with the Race Equality and Diversity Service's culture-specific resources.

During the course, the TAs found the opportunity to have discussions with Gypsy/Traveller children and parents to be extremely useful. These discussions challenged the course attendees' preconceptions and gave them a greater understanding of the issues faced by these communities.

During the first day of training, the TAs were supported to come up with an idea for a project working with the Gypsy/Traveller children in their school. They then had a month to work in their schools on these projects before attending the second training day where the

projects were discussed with the other TA course attendees and the course deliverers.

Both TAs chose different projects. One of the TAs worked with his/her literacy group, which included both Gypsy/Traveller children and children from other communities. S/he directed the children in a performance based on a children's story book that reflected the Gypsy/Traveller community. The other TA worked with a group of children who attended a storytelling day that was led by a Gypsy/Traveller. S/he then worked with the children to produce a display of the work that was created by them during the storytelling day.

### **IMPACT OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY**

The TAs felt that the course and the associated project work increased their knowledge and impacted positively on their work practice. It was also clear that their attendance had wider positive impacts and benefits for the whole school community.

Working on the projects enabled the TAs to develop and put into practice learning opportunities that were culturally relevant to the Gypsy/Traveller children. They also observed many benefits for the Gypsy/Traveller children who took part in the project, including:

- Having the opportunity to 'show' their community in a positive light.
- Boosting their confidence.
- Greater engagement in learning.
- Improved school attendance.

An additional positive impact of these projects was felt to be that they raised awareness of the Gypsy/Traveller community amongst a wider audience. The performance and the display were presented to the school population and to parents.

The knowledge/skills that TAs gained were reported to have had impacts beyond the period that they were working on the projects. The TAs' perception and understanding of Gypsy/Traveller communities developed due to the discussions they had with members of these communities during training. They now have a greater understanding of why it can be difficult for Gypsy/Traveller children to complete homework. As such, they now would not punish these children for not submitting homework, but would offer to work with them at lunchtime to enable them to complete it. The TAs also noted that the course had been of value for them when working with teachers to develop lesson plans that are more applicable to Gypsy/Traveller children.

### **KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL TRAINING**

The TAs felt that their learning objectives had been met and that the course had a positive impact on their practice, knowledge and skills level. The key factors for the success of the course were felt to be:

- The opportunity and the provision of school time to work on projects
- The course was a good mixture of presentations and discussions
- The opportunity to share experiences with other TAs
- The questions used by Race Equality and Diversity Service staff to lead and focus discussions
- Discussions with Gypsy/Travellers parents and children, which were felt to be really

valuable

- The visual aspect of the course
- Time for reflection and informal discussions.

Both TAs felt that they would have liked to have been able to attend the course sooner. They felt that by the time they attended the course, they had already had considerable experience of working with Gypsy/Traveller children. As such, they felt that they would have benefited if some of the discussion groups had catered more for people with more experience. They both felt that they would now like to attend an advanced course.

#### **CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The TAs felt that the course was an excellent mixture of learning opportunities and provided a very positive experience. Their only suggestion for improvement, noted above, was that they wished the course had been available to them sooner. However, they also felt that, in their work, there is not very much time available to keep up to date with current guidelines/national strategies and felt it would be useful if refresher training was available on this.

### **Example 2: Training delivered to Trainee Teachers**

#### **THE LEARNING ACTIVITY**

In this example, trainee teachers received two days of equality and diversity training during which The Race Equality and Diversity Service provided a session on working with Gypsy/Traveller children. Training covered cultural issues, education and achievement issues, teaching approaches and culturally relevant resources. Training was a combination of discussions and presentations. The training was felt to be very relevant for teachers likely to work in the local area as they would probably then be working with Gypsy/Traveller children. More widely, the training was seen to be important as the teachers developed inclusive practice which would be of value wherever they were working.

#### **IMPACT OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY**

The lecturer who arranged this training day for the teacher trainees stated that the direct impacts of this training are not measured. The most important impact is felt to be that teachers learn about inclusive practice. It is hoped that the impacts of the training will be realised in the longer term throughout the trainees' teaching careers.

#### **KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL TRAINING**

- Less formal, encourages participation
- Challenges attitudes
- Encourages reflection
- Includes activities that promote discussion
- Not confrontational.

#### **CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The only improvement suggested was to allocate more time for the training. This, it was believed, would allow more time for discussion and perhaps the opportunity to meet and

talk to members of the Gypsy/Traveller community.

### Example 3: Training delivered to Education Welfare Officers

#### THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

This training covered basic awareness, educational issues, local information, cultural issues (shown on a DVD), as well as discussions with a Fairground Couple and Gypsy/Traveller children. Delivery was a mixture of presentations and discussions. Discussions with Gypsy/Travellers were felt to be very useful in terms of gaining a personal insight and a broadening of awareness. Also perceived to be of value was the opportunity to have discussion in multi-agency groups during the training.

#### IMPACT OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

The training was seen as having direct impacts on the work of the EWO concerned. Since talking to Gypsy/Traveller children during training, s/he now produces a card displaying his/her details, but also a picture relevant to Gypsy/Travellers. This has led to the children being more willing to carry it and, as a result, they are believed to be more likely to keep in contact. Other aspects covered in training that had a particular impact included: the importance of family, access to transport, availability of water for mobile families and gender issues.

#### KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL TRAINING

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should not be compulsory</li> <li>• Needs to be revisited</li> <li>• Must be up to date</li> <li>• Delivery style should be varied</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should always start with the basics</li> <li>• Should outline to daily routine of Gypsy/Traveller life</li> <li>• Needs to include multi-agency discussion groups</li> <li>• Should reflect the value of including Gypsy/Travellers</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

#### CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

It was reported that there could sometimes be issues with trainees making inappropriate comments. These were dealt with well by the Race Equality and Diversity Service and often lead to further discussion. It was suggested that it could be valuable for trainees to be able to view a trailer or to see pictures of trailers during training, as this would give them a greater idea of how families live. As one trainee commented:

*Training from [the Race Equality and Diversity Service] is never a disappointment and you always learn something new.*

### Example 4: Training delivered by a TA from the Irish Traveller Community

#### THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

A TA from an Irish Traveller background assists with the Race Equality and Diversity Service's training and is particularly involved in discussion activities with course attendees. The TA felt that these discussions are very valuable as they: challenge misconceptions, address prejudices, increase cultural understanding and provide ideas and techniques for

communicating and working with Gypsy/Travellers.
<b>IMPACT OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY</b>
The main impacts are from raising awareness. After professionals have discussions with members of the Gypsy/Traveller communities during training they will often say 'I didn't realise that'. The trainer noted that course attendees learn: not to believe the bad press, how valuable it is to welcome Gypsy/Travellers into schools, how to approach Gypsy/Travellers, the importance of family to these communities, to develop trust, that Gypsy/Travellers are not 'bad' people, and how differently the Gypsy/Traveller community is from a school community. They are also given examples of good practice for working with members of the Gypsy/Traveller community.
<b>KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL TRAINING</b>
Training is a success as people learn about Gypsy/Travellers lives from watching a film and by directly talking to members of these communities. It is also valuable to talk with members of the Gypsy/Traveller community who are working for schools or the local authority. These discussions should include barriers and positive issues.
<b>CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED</b>
The challenge is to involve more people from different Gypsy/Traveller groups in the delivery of training. The trainer felt that it is important for people to understand the differences between groups. It was noted that this is difficult to arrange as not all Gypsy/Traveller groups are willing to take part in delivering training.

### Example 5: Training delivered by an Early Years professional

<b>THE LEARNING ACTIVITY</b>
The main focus of the training to early years settings was to promote inclusive working practices with Gypsy/Traveller children and to encourage early years staff to build relationships with Gypsy/Traveller families. The training was very interactive and includes activities and discussions based around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Barriers to access</li> <li>•Dispersing media myths</li> <li>•Racism</li> <li>•Cultural and lifestyle</li> <li>•Explanations about different groups</li> <li>•Historical Context</li> <li>•Strategies for inclusion</li> <li>•Use of culturally appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>IMPACT OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY</b>
Staff at early years settings who they have trained have subsequently had positive interactions with Gypsy/Traveller children and success using culturally appropriate resources.
<b>KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL TRAINING</b>
It was stated that training should be pitched at the right level, be relevant, allow exploration of ideas and promote discussion and the use of a quiz to promote discussion and interaction was recommended. They also asked participants to write down commonly held opinions, and statements that they have read or heard, regarding the Gypsy/ Traveller Communities. The purpose of the activity was to recognise the hostile attitude that is generally held towards Travellers and to consider the impact this has as a barrier to learning. This activity also helps to dispel myth and challenge generalisations.

**CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

It was reported that more time after training would be useful, to allow for follow up work and to provide tailored support to settings.

During larger training sessions, members of the Gypsy/Traveller community were involved, but it was felt to be valuable for everyone to experience this direct interaction. The incorporation of a site visit was also suggested.



## Case study B: training session focusing on the Roma community delivered via a presentation to members of the Primary Care Trust (PCT)

### THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

This case study focuses on a training event provided by the Roma Support Coordinator of a county-wide Traveller Education Advisory and Support Team (TEAST). The focus of the training event was on providing information and learning activities concerned with the theme of 'Central and East European (CEE) Roma – Supporting Roma Communities'. The activities aimed to enable participants to explore a wide range of issues relevant to Roma communities, and to explore possible solutions to meet identified individual needs. The training event was held over a two hour period in the early afternoon in a room within a Sure Start Children's Centre setting.

#### Who was involved in the training event

The event was commissioned by a city Primary Care Trust (PCT), and provided by a member of the TEAST, the Roma Support Coordinator, who has extensive experience of working with the local Roma community. Attendees were mostly, but not exclusively, health professionals who are members of the PCT. The professionals in attendance included several PCT managers, a Fresh Start practitioner, a Health Visitor, a Practice Educator, New Entrants Service Workers, two Social Care professionals, Family Support workers, GP receptionists, and a Sure Start Community Development worker.

#### Rationale for delivering the training event

The commissioners of the training believed that there was a need for background information on Roma history, for example, a focus on EU enlargement and reasons why Roma settle in the area, as well as understanding about the reasons for current patterns of behaviour regarding access to services. There is perceived to be a lot of ignorance which needs to be overcome. Practitioners have substantial contact with housed Roma, and the fact that they are a very mobile group is believed to present challenges. There was felt to be a need to support practitioners to develop trust, as well as for training which is supportive of multi-agency approaches.

#### How the training event was organised

The content of the training was agreed in advance with the commissioning organisation, to ensure it was tailored to their needs.

There were two main parts to the two-hour session. The first part was a presentation by the trainer, supported with a Powerpoint presentation and handouts, which covered five thematic areas: origins of Roma communities, history, culture, language, and education. The presentation consisted of the following main topics:

- Emerging communities – CEE Roma in the area
- Origins and history
- Who are the Roma?
- The Roma culture
- Religion
- Romanes or Romany - The language of Roma

- Education
- Status of the Roma prior to the EU enlargement
- Expanding Europe
- Roma population in Europe
- The UK approach to the enlargement
- The nature of the emerging Roma communities.

The emphasis in the first part of the session was on providing an understanding of economic, historical, social and institutional factors underpinning 'cultural awareness'. The presentation highlighted the diversity of communities' histories, with particular emphasis on both European and local aspects, and the complex causes of the current situation for Roma communities, including the current legal status and rights of economic migrants.

The second part involved professionals from different backgrounds working in small groups to consider specific case studies concerning Roma families which were presented to them. Three separate case studies were discussed by different groups. They were to carry out two main tasks:

- identify the key issues relating to their own professional work in the cases
- identify which professionals would take specific leading roles in addressing the issues.

The rationale for putting professionals from different backgrounds together was to ensure that different perspectives were shared in the group, and multi-agency solutions were developed.

### IMPACT OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

#### Impacts on knowledge

The immediate impacts on professionals' knowledge, according to the trainer, included:

- A better historical understanding and greater cultural awareness. The trainer believed professionalism in this area should be grounded in the first instance in understanding communities rather than taking an emotional stance.

The recipient of training who was interviewed had gained knowledge of:

- Roma communities' historical background, political, social and economic conditions, languages and religion.
- S/he had become more sensitive to language issues and was learning some of the language.

Evaluation sheets from the training session recurrently highlighted the excellent provision of in-depth information: *'very good and informative'* *'excellent – in-depth knowledge of trainer'* *'excellent information provision, useful background, helpful for engagement'*

#### Impacts on skills and practice

The impacts of previous, similar courses on professionals' skills and practice, according to the trainer, included:

- Developing more relaxed and confident approaches to working – through dismantling stereotypes and addressing fears.

The recipient of training who was interviewed gave an example of the main impact on his/her practice which was to encourage him/her to behave in an informed way. S/he would now routinely 'shake hands' with Roma people to overcome a history of discrimination which had included treating Roma as 'untouchable' [sic]. In his/her view, the learning from this session could be sustained because it involved transforming professionals' attitudes towards greater commitment, on the basis of being well-informed.

Evaluation sheets from the training session suggested that the learning would be '*helpful for engagement*', although it was believed that more time would be needed to think through service-specific implications for good practice.

### **Wider Impacts**

The wider impacts of the training, according to the trainer, included:

- Mainstreaming service delivery – non-specialist services delivered services to Roma on a more equitable basis. This involved supporting Roma communities to overcome dependency and to be more self-sufficient, to develop better trust and understanding of services, and to overcome the feeling of being a 'stateless people'.
- Multi-agency practice and learning – professionals would learn more about each others' work through working together more in the future.

The trainer's evidence for these impacts came from first-hand experience of ongoing networking contacts with the professionals working together to improve access for Roma, and from evaluation sheets.

The recipient's experience was that learning was transferred through team meetings, for example, within the PCT, where half of the team s/he worked in were nurses and the others were health visitors. In this context, it was felt to be important to put an item concerning Roma on team meeting agendas to establish a formal commitment to discussion.

There were 'anecdotal' impacts of the training on families according to the recipient, including:

- Greater willingness to engage.
- Trust e.g. providing an address when moving on, and feeling less need to remain 'hidden'.

### **KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS**

For the trainer (the Roma Support Coordinator), key factors in successful training included:

- The first-hand experience of the trainer.
- Appropriate expertise – if a Roma community member takes on the trainer role, that person would need the right expertise. A long-term goal, from the TEAST perspective, is to nurture and develop Roma role models who work successfully in mainstream services.

- Considered, step-by-step planning, and a careful match between expectations and delivery.

For the recipient interviewee key factors included:

- The commitment and passion of the trainer.
- The well-structured and in-depth presentation covering a broad range of relevant topics.
- The workshop section.
- Opportunities for networking in the middle.

The participants' evaluation sheets from the session highlighted:

- The in-depth knowledge of the trainer.
- The insights provided into the challenges faced by Roma communities and their historic causes.

### CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

For the trainer, challenges for effective training for working with Roma communities included:

- The need for very careful preparation.
- For a trainer whose first language is not English, there are challenges to present information at the appropriate high quality level in a second or additional language.
- Dealing with undercurrents of racism.
- It is important to establish and maintain good relationships with the Roma community as a precursor to any effective training.
- Having a good understanding of 'theory' – conceptual issues need to be considered, e.g. concerning institutional discrimination; historic, economic, social and cultural factors; the statelessness and diversity of Roma communities.
- Clarity concerning the intentions for training, and then carrying out the stated intentions.

For the recipient interviewee, the challenges included:

- Involving the Roma community in training.
- Holding the session in appropriate venues, convenient for participants and suitable in terms of facilities and acoustics.
- Tailoring training with greater specificity to meet particular professional groups' needs e.g. the health visitors' work with interpreters. This might require a further session.

The participants' evaluation sheets from the session, which were generally very positive about the training session, also highlighted a number of challenges. These included challenges for participants within the session, and challenges for future practice.

**Within the session.** The session was only two hours long, and more time was felt

necessary to engage further with service-specific solutions to issues raised; and to address the many questions which were raised about Roma communities:

*I feel I have so many more questions [session attendee].*

**For future practice.** Practitioners also recognised the challenges of developing community contacts and effective networking with Roma communities:

*It's very difficult to engage with communities without contacts in those communities [session attendee].*

It was felt that a further session for knowledge sharing and networking between different services would be valuable.

## Case study C: 'Training for Gypsy/Traveller trainers' – Professional development for members of the Gypsy/Traveller community to deliver training to those working with Gypsy/Traveller communities

### THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

This case study focuses on a training course for members of Gypsy/Traveller communities with the aim of providing members with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver training to professionals working with Gypsy and Traveller communities. It gives details of the training course delivered to community members as well as the training sessions they went on to deliver.

#### **Rationale for delivering the 'training for Gypsy/Traveller trainers' course to members of GRT communities**

The main role of the organisation which developed the 'training for Gypsy/Traveller trainers' course is to provide an advocacy service for Gypsy and Traveller community members. However, staff also deliver training and support for professionals working with Gypsy/Traveller communities as part of their remit. Staff felt it was necessary to deliver training in partnership with members of the community, given that they can talk first hand about issues facing members of Gypsy/Traveller communities, their history and culture, as well as their experiences of service use. As a member of the organisation noted:

*Why I think there is so much racism around Gypsies and Travellers is because they don't know us, most people would never know that they had met a Gypsy or a Traveller, so having Gypsies and Travellers delivering training changes so many perceptions.*

There was some concern from organisation staff however, that certain organisations/services providing training included members of Gypsy/Traveller communities 'tokenistically'. For example, this could involve inviting community members to speak at training events without providing them with the necessary skills to deliver their stories to what could sometimes be hostile or racist audiences. As one interviewee described:

*The thing that I'd found when delivering training round Gypsies and Travellers was dealing with hostility. I have done equality training for 25 years and had never experienced the level of personal attack that you do when you are talking about Gypsies and Travellers.*

The organisation therefore felt there was a need to train members of Gypsy/Traveller communities in presentation and listening skills and to give them an opportunity to reflect on their own views and stereotypes in order to deliver to audiences in an appropriate manner.

#### **The development of the 'training for Gypsy/Traveller trainers' course**

The organisation looked at the training courses available for Gypsy and Traveller community members and found that there was no training pack or course to meet their specific needs. A representative from the organisation noted:

*I quite naively thought I could go out there and find a training pack that would give people the skills, because there is a great deal of rhetoric out there about giving people from grass roots levels these sorts of skills so they can go off and be trainers. In fact, there wasn't a pack.*

The organisation self funded the training course. It was an Open College Network (OCN) accredited course developed by a training consultancy service. In order to develop the training course to meet the specific needs of members of Gypsy/Traveller communities, a training consultant delivered a taster day to a group of seven community members. These members had worked with the organisation for a number of years as volunteers. The taster day was used to trial exercises to see what learning methods worked well with the group and to give community members an opportunity to see what would be involved in a training course of this nature.

The training course was delivered over a six-month period between September 2007 and April 2008. One of the main issues the course developer had to consider was that some of those attending the training chose to have no literacy, therefore the course needed to be developed in such a way that it was accessible to those with varying levels of reading and writing skills. In order to achieve an OCN qualification, learners were required to document their learning, this was achieved through the use of pictorial evidence such as photographs, recordings and videos.

### **How the learning activity was organised**

The formal training course was delivered via a two/three hour session held on Saturday mornings at a local community centre. The rationale for using this type of approach was so that the necessary amount of formal teaching hours could be completed for the OCN accreditation. Members were also required to complete a portfolio of their learning independently of the taught session.

Some of the areas covered by the training included:

- stereotyping
- how learners learn
- how to control a room
- dealing with hostility
- body language.

As one learner commented:

*It was very enjoyable because you are learning how to deal with certain people... these are all of the things you need if you are going to get up and start speaking.*

As well as the taught group sessions, there was one to one support and telephone communication with the course leader to support portfolio development.

## **IMPACT OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY**

### **Impacts on Gypsy/Traveller trainers**

Those who completed the course talked about having increased confidence in their capacity to deliver training, and increased self-esteem and positivity about their own capabilities.

On completion, learners received a qualification in presentation and listening skills. They reported that participating in the course had led them to enrol on further courses including basic skills and ICT:

*Id never thought about doing things like that, you want more knowledge, you want to learn*

more (Gypsy/Traveller trainer).

### **Impacts on those attending training delivered by Gypsy/Traveller trainers**

Some of those participating in the course went on to work for a national organisation delivering training across the country. For some professionals in attendance, this was the first time they had met or heard from a member of the Gypsy/Traveller community.

*Hearing it from the horse's mouth, as it were, made a huge impact on me because Gypsies and Travellers get a huge negative press... to actually meet the two ladies and hear it from their own mouth is absolutely invaluable... I can now speak from what I heard rather than speaking from second or third hand.*

This affected the attendees' knowledge of Gypsy/Traveller communities and his/her confidence and ability to confront others who used wrong terminology or made a prejudicial comment about Gypsy/Traveller communities. As a local councillor, the interviewee felt s/he was also now able to make more informed decisions regarding planning and provision for Gypsies and Travellers and share knowledge gained with colleagues. For example s/he noted:

*I had never met a Gypsy or Traveller before so it was hugely important for me because I'm trying to recommend how we go forward with site provision and trying to make provision for something that I had absolutely no knowledge of and you just can't do that.*

Participants also commented on the professionalism of the trainers. As one interviewee commented:

*Their grace was amazing, they listened to what we had to say, they answered all of our questions, they were very dignified and there was no 'we're treated appallingly, isn't it awful, poor us', there was none of that, it was just completely dignified and completely factual.*

Another attendee of the training event reported that s/he had kept her own identity as a member the Gypsy/Traveller community from her work colleagues. S/he admitted to colleagues and other participants during the training session that s/he was related to one of the trainers and that s/he was from a Romany background. S/he commented:

*You came across so well with your training that I felt so proud to say what I was.*

### **KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS**

Interviewees reported the following key factors as components in the successful training for Gypsy/Traveller trainers:

- The recruitment of participants to training who have existing relationships and established trust with organisations/providers
- The development of a course for participants with varying levels of literacy
- The adaptability of the trainer to meet the varied needs of the group
- The trainer's skills instil confidence in learners. To be patient and nurturing with community members who may not have experienced any kind of formal learning
- Developing the confidence and experience of Gypsy/Traveller trainers by providing opportunities to deliver sessions as co-trainers. This enables more experienced trainers to step in if they have any difficulties.



## CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Interviewees listed the following aspects as challenges for including Gypsies and Travellers in training:

- **Availability of training courses:** there is a lack of training courses available to develop the training skills of Gypsies and Travellers.
- **Levels of Literacy:** It is likely that members of the Gypsy/Traveller community will have varying literacy skills and there is a need to ensure that all training materials and documentation of learning for accreditation purposes can be completed through audio and visual methods
- **Group dynamics:** having a mixed training group of Gypsy/Traveller men and women can be challenging.
- **The level of commitment needed:** Although the taster day gave a flavour of the level of commitment that would be required, some Gypsy/Traveller community members were unable to see the course through to completion because commitment was quite onerous.

Interviewees noted the following aspects as potential improvements to the training delivered to Gypsy/Traveller trainers:

- **Widening participation:** To provide training courses to a greater number of members of the GRT community and offer a training course specifically for male members of community.
- **Extend the training for existing Gypsy/Traveller trainers:** To provide additional advanced modules to those members who have completed the training course in order to continue to develop their knowledge and skills.
- **The provision of childcare facilities:** To provide crèche facilities during training sessions to enable members of the community with children to receive childcare.

## Case study D: GRT awareness training for police officers

### THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

An independent police advisory group (which includes GRT community members) recognised a need for awareness raising training among police officers. The area professional development unit was asked to form links with the authority's Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) to develop a programme of awareness raising training. There were two strands to the police awareness training commissioned, a student officer placement and a formal training session.

#### How the learning activity was organised

Strand 1: A member of the TESS and a member of the Traveller Liaison Team delivered the formal training session. The training involved a two and a half hour session with 20 delegates. Twelve student police officers attended and the session was also made available to others in the Police force where it was deemed appropriate (e.g. Minority Ethnic Liaison Officers, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and established PCs on Safer Neighbourhood Teams).

The formal training session focussed on the following areas:

- Introduction to Traveller Liaison and Traveller Education services
- History of GRT communities and some cultural facts
- Local Context (numbers of GRT community members in the authority, sites/accommodation and education statistics)
- Key local events relating to the community
- Community tensions (myths, the media, racism, prejudice and stereotyping)
- The local authority partnership (agencies involved in the Gypsy Traveller Liaison Group (GTLG) dealing with GTR issues including the police, Traveller Liaison Team TESS, an advocacy service for GRT communities and members of the GRT communities themselves).
- The local authority protocol for unauthorised encampments (the role of partners and other interested parties e.g. Local MPs and County Councillors)
- Scenario - "Imagine yourself in the Police role being called out to an encampment, how might you approach this?"
- Questions and answers.

Strand 2: As student officers, new recruits are required to undergo a training phase. The student police officer placement with TESS and Traveller Liaison staff was part of their community placement rotation. A risk assessment was carried out prior to the placement. The officer spent five days shadowing staff and participated in the following activities:

- Observation of an authority-wide service protocol meeting focussing on GRT communities
- Shadowing of a Traveller Liaison Officer
- Attendance at an interagency meeting of services who have involvement with GRT

communities

- Attendance at TESS team meeting focusing on support and planning updates
- Accompanied visits to unofficial and private GRT sites
- Participation in a mobile library visit to a GRT site
- Observation of one-to-one teaching of GRT pupils in a primary school
- Observation of a PSHE lesson on cultural awareness delivered to secondary school pupils.

The student officer also received preparatory material from the TESS prior to the visit. S/he was able to complete background reading on cultural awareness before meeting with GRT families. The officer noted:

*I was able to get a really good grounding in the differences [between GRT communities] before I went out.*

### IMPACT OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

Strand 1: Interviewees described how participation in the formal training session led to the following impacts:

- **Increased knowledge and understanding** – The training session covered the history of GRT communities and the current situation of GRT communities residing in the authority. This was felt to have brought trainee officers 'up to speed'. It was also suggested that they had an increased awareness of policies and procedures relating to GRTs in the community (e.g. the LAs protocol for unauthorised encampments) which they would be required to adhere to in their future work. There was also felt to be a greater awareness of services and individual staff involved in partnership to support GRTs.

As the Traveller liaison officer noted:

*It's an awareness, they know now that we exist and that was the main hub that we wanted to achieve, seeing the faces of the people who do the work. When they go out on the street and if something occurs, they can ring up and say 'I remember you from the training sessions'. It is easier to work in partnership with people you know... The awareness of the police officers has increased and they know that there are people in this field that they can turn to if any of these situations arise.*

Strand 2: The student officer placement led to the following impacts:

- **Greater knowledge of GRT communities** – Reflecting on the placement the student officer noted: I'd never even thought of them as an ethnic group before I just thought that they were people who live in caravans there is obviously a lot more to their culture and their history that I never realised.

Visits to sites occupied by different GRT communities led to a greater insight into the communities for the officer. For example, working with staff from the mobile library s/he was able to observe how GRT parents interacted with books. The student officer commented that some of the parents were reluctant to be involved, s/he noted:

*... it was an eye opener that they had no concept of what a library was and how to use it [the library].*

A member of the TESS commented:

*S/he went away knowing little things that no one else would know unless they worked with these communities.*

- **Increased understanding of the views of the community** – By talking to both GRTs and members of the settled community during the course of the placement, the student officer gained a greater insight into how the two communities viewed each other. This was particularly relevant to his/her role as s/he was now able to understand some of the concerns of the communities. For example, some GRT community members spoke of how they were often attributed to crimes by members of local community and the media particularly around the times of local shows/fairs. *'It is something in that I have never thought about before but having spoke to them and heard their worries and fears it brought it to my attention.'*
- **Increased knowledge and understanding of local protocols and procedures** – attendance at the interagency meeting led to an increased understating of staff roles from various agencies as well as an increased knowledge and understanding of local protocols and procedures in relation to GRT communities.

### **Impact on skills/practice**

Strand 1 - Those who participated in the training were asked evaluate the session. A number of those competing evaluation forms anticipated that the knowledge gained would help them to interact with GRT communities in the future:

*I now have a better understanding of their culture this has dispelled a lot of stereotypes, it will help me in my role.*

*[We now have] contacts with Traveller Liaison who have knowledge and skills to assist us. It has given me a better understanding and confidence to approach any such sites in the future.*

Some officers reported that the training had not changed views of GRT communities as they had already spent some time working with these communities prior to the session. However, other officers felt that the training had changed their perceptions of GRT communities, as one student officer commented: *'They need to be treated as humans not stereotypes.'*

Strand 2- The student officer was not yet operational however s/he did acknowledge that the placement had shaped the way s/he would interact with GRT communities in the future. For example, after visiting GRT sites and talking to families the officer found that there was some reluctance to speak to the police from community members. However, s/he recognised that this reluctance possibly came from the approach of the police when visiting sites (e.g. driving on to the site in police vehicles when there was a problem rather than making regular visits to sites on foot to build community relations).

*Just being able to stop and chat for two minutes makes a big difference to them and building up that rapport, so that the next time you go they recognise you as the community police officer, that was a biggie for me. (Student police officer)*

The officer also found from his/her time spent on sites that, when there were no males

from the GRT communities present, female members may be reluctant to talk to a police officer. The officer reported that s/he would now ensure that wherever possible s/he would approach a site when there was a male present. S/he commented 'whereas before I might have just thought they were being awkward' the officer now understood reasons behind the lack of engagement. This is particularly important, as the officer will be part of a safer neighbourhood team where s/he will have a key role in building relationships within the community.

### Sharing of learning with colleagues

Strand 1: It was anticipated that Minority Ethnic Liaison Officers (MELOs) who also attended the training would disseminate the learning with colleagues either through formal presentation or direct work with individual officers who nominated working with GRT communities as an area for development in their personalised learning plans.

Strand 2: The student officer was required as part of his/her placement to share his/her experiences with other trainee officers and senior staff. S/he gave an oral presentation on the history of the GRT communities, the differences between groups, and his/her experience of the placement in terms of appropriate ways of interacting with GRT communities. The training officer who attended the presentation reported impacts on his/her own understanding of good practice in working with the community, which s/he had never previously considered. There was also felt to have been an impact on the perception of other student officers towards GRT communities. The student officer noted: 'It did open their eyes and a lot of the information I came back with perhaps led them to view people from this community in a different way'.

Fellow students of the officer were said to be initially pleased they had not been given the TESS placement, perceiving it to be the least worthwhile. However following the presentation, the officer gave about his experiences they changed their views. A TESS worker who attended the student officers' presentation noted:

*Once they heard the presentation, they felt that that placement had been the best out of all of them. I just think it was so valuable because those three police officers turned their views around and they said 'we want to go onto a Traveller site now.'*

The TESS officer went on to comment:

*It wasn't just the student officers that were impressed (with the presentation) it was the higher up police officers and the people training him. They were then asking him questions and me questions... a lot of people were saying 'I never knew that, that's really interesting', everyone saw the Traveller community in a different light.*

### KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Strand 1: Key factors in the success of the training session included:

- **Target audience** – training was delivered to student police officers as they are required to undertake a varied induction programme and have allotted time for training. As they are not operational, they are not required to come off frontline duty in order to complete the training. New officers are initially placed in safer neighbourhood teams and required to engage and involve communities making this training particularly relevant to their role.
- **Joint delivery** – the training was delivered jointly by a member of the TESS and a member for the Traveller liaison team. This provided officers with a good overview of

both teams and their specialisms.

- **Method of delivery** – the formal training session was felt to be the most appropriate way to deliver to a large group of student officers. It allowed face-to-face contact with key members of the TESS and Traveller liaison team.
- **Keeping it simple** – *‘Don’t make it too complicated, it is quite easy when you work in a field to over complicate things because you know it so well, it’s easy to go into areas that you don’t need to in a set amount of time , planning is key.’* (Traveller liaison officer)
- **Partnership working** – the organisation of the training required good partnership working at strategic level between the TESS and the police. ‘By working partnership on these things you get a better result than working in your own bubbles’ (Police Training Manager).

Strand 2: Key factors to the successfulness of the student officer placement included:

- Background reading - the student officer felt that a key success factor was to carry out background reading prior to the placement help his/her understanding and prepare him/her for discussions with community members
- Offering a varied programme of activity - including engaging with members of different GRT communities, experience of authorised and unauthorised sites and a range of services who support GRT communities.
- Engaging in face to face contact to build up relationships — *‘It’s best to have the hands-on contact, I think that it’s more valuable to go on to a site, to meet people. To be directly involved with the community is better than just listening to it because the words can go in and out but if you have actually been you can relate the information you have got with what you have seen’* (TESS representative).

## CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Interviewees suggested the following challenges relating to the two strands of training:

Strand 1

- Limited resources mean that training of this nature cannot be delivered to all officers.

Strand 2

- Although the placement was well planned and organised there were occasions where GRT families were not available on site to speak with the officer
- The risk assessment identified that there were some aspects to the work of the TESS that were perhaps inappropriate for a trainee police officer (three weeks into their training)
- The work shadowing placement cannot be provided to all officers due to lack of time and resources. Placements have been limited to once every term to reduce the burden on TESS staff.

Improvements cited by interviewees included:

Strand 1

- The evaluation forms completed by attendees revealed that in addition to the procedures of the local protocol for unauthorised encampments some officers would

appreciate more real life case studies about how this protocol operated in practice.

Strand 2

- Increased time to be spent interacting with GRT community members
- For the student officer to follow up the placement once operational

## Case study E: 'Come and Count with us' – the production of an Early Years book and CD-Rom resources

### THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

This case study focuses on the production of a book 'Come and Count with Us' together with a CD-Rom version, as a classroom resource, drawing on interactive whiteboard technology. The process of producing and disseminating the resources was viewed by those involved in producing them as providing them and others (e.g. the audience at dissemination events) with valuable learning experiences, although it was not a formal training event.

A primary objective of the book was to provide a resource for early years outreach work. There was an awareness of the lack of books suitable for GRT families, which had arisen from the experience of the existing Playbag scheme. The Playbags contain educational materials, including books, jigsaws and small toys. For the GRT parent who was involved in the resource production, a purpose of the book was raising awareness about GRT communities among teachers and among the wider community.

#### **Who was involved in the book and CD-Rom production?**

The Head of the county's Early Years and Childcare Team (EYCT) commissioned the book. The Head of the TESS Early Years team led on the implementation of the book initiative, while a member of the Local Authority ICT service developed the resource from the book stage to the CD-Rom stage. Members of a GRT family were fully involved in the book production. The production therefore involved staff from the TESS, Local Authority ICT staff, and GRT community members. The project enabled a partnership with parents and the wider GRT Community to be developed, from the conception of ideas for the book, through the sourcing of materials, and planning the photo shoot, to the resulting launch party.

#### **How the book and CD-Rom production was organised**

The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) structure included a working group on Equality and Inclusion to which the TESS Early Years Coordinator belonged. In this group, the difficulties of engaging with more children from more mobile families were discussed, the Playbag project was initiated, and the book idea subsequently developed.

#### **Book production.**

The TESS coordinator led on book production, working with a GRT parent. The parent contributed ideas during a series of sessions at the Traveller site, about what should be in the book, including positive images of the children on the site, in the trailer and among family objects. Subsequent visits to the site involved a photography session and a video shoot. The parent suggested items and images which s/he thought would be interesting to other children.

#### **The CD-Rom – the two team sessions.**

The ICT consultant drew on his/her experience as an interactive white board consultant for early years work. Work on the CD involved consultation with the TESS coordinator and advanced skills teachers (ASTs). The first session that the ICT consultant undertook with these colleagues was primarily focused on increasing his/her own knowledge and awareness of GRT communities. Viewing the photographs for the book, his/her insight was that the work could be linked to the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning initiative (SEAL). It was decided to develop a multi-media book, presenting photographs with a



written guide, using images to encourage Traveller children to record what was going on. The video was intended to provide a tour of the site.

After the first session, work activities were divided up. The team considered how the new resources would link to planning in early years, and be used with Early Years practitioners in all schools with Foundation units. At a second session, it was decided to record GRT children's voices speaking over text which was accomplished in schools with a laptop.

### **A wider context of partnership working**

The book production and its use formed part of a wider picture of partnership learning opportunity. For example, as a resource for outreach work, the book was available locally for Children's Centre staff on joint home visits with workers from the TESS. One person might play or read with a child, while the other person interpreted the process for the parent. A key aim was reported to be engaging parents and children in early learning. From the Traveller parent perspective, Travellers were said to have more confidence in a professional if that person was first seen to be working with the resources along with a TESS professional who was already trusted.

## **IMPACT OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY**

### **Impacts on professional knowledge, skills and practice**

The ICT consultant felt that s/he had started on the project with some prejudices. Her cultural concept of GRT families was changed through the co-working sessions. She gained knowledge, for example about:

- land ownership patterns
- terminology
- variability of Traveller communities and travel patterns.

For the ICT consultant, the first session provided the steepest learning curve, while meeting Traveller children led to further learning. While the team was recording children's voices, the informal discussion was said to be enlightening. The key to learning was reported to be that the engagement was with GRT children on a meaningful task, and that around the task (with visual stimuli) there was conversation about the GRT lifestyle.

The ICT consultant had been to a workshop in another local authority with Early Years practitioners, gaining more ideas there about the education of Travellers e.g. the implications of the 'e-profile'. The resource also formed part of evidence about curriculum planning and inclusion which was used by the same consultant for the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers.

### **Sharing of learning with colleagues**

#### **Local and regional sharing**

The book was reported to have sold well: it had been re-printed and sold to different authorities. The purpose of the book broadened beyond that of outreach work, copies were made available to all schools and early education settings, and a 'big version' was produced for use in all classes. All schools in the Local Authority received a big book and a CD-Rom. Through being used in classrooms it was reported to have affected other teachers' and children's views of Traveller lifestyle. The materials will also be used on training programmes associated with the EYDCP.

The CD resource was first shared with the TESS teams, then with the schools working on the GRT project. Initially it was developed as an Early Years resource but later it was

demonstrated to cross-phase practitioners, as far as those working with 16 years olds. Then it was presented to participants on the regional DCSF-funded GRT project. CDs were also given out to representatives of every school in the authority at Early Years network meetings.

**National sharing.** There was strategic interest in sharing of resources, as part of national networking, not only within TESS networks but also more widely, e.g. between Early Years services. It was said by the Head of the County EYCT that there might be potential to encourage other local authorities to support production of similar materials.

### **Wider impacts**

#### **Engagement.**

The EYCT would be keen to undertake a similar project again. Reasons for this included that it met objectives of the inclusion agenda, while demographic factors within the local authority meant that the GRT issue remained a priority, and it had provided a stimulus for networking and learning. For example, the book was said to have been particularly good for developing linkages between pre-school and school.

**Totemic value.** The book was viewed as symbolic of a wider process of overcoming negative impressions and supporting engagement. At the launch conference it was praised by the Commissioner of Children's Services, and had stimulated networking.

**Gypsy and Traveller community.** For the GRT participants, the ICT consultant reported that there was excitement at seeing their own community represented in mainstream educational resources. The GRT family that contributed to the book felt that there was a wide impact across the country. Friends and relatives in other parts of the country commented that the book was in use at schools attended by their children. Attending the Partner's In Excellence Award Finalists Ceremony at Lancaster House, London was reported to have been 'inspiring', because it had been obvious to the GRT community that a great deal of publicity and interest was generated. At fairs such as Appleby the fact that the book was on sale indicated that Traveller children were involved in something with status in the mainstream. The impact on the community concerned changing attitudes – gaining encouragement to feel more equal, accepted and valued:

*... making you feel special really, that you are someone in Britain and not just 'stinking Gypsies' [sic].* It showed the GRT community that *"they could be picked for things [GRT parent]."*

The GRT parent whose family participated felt that that the book increased others' awareness, showing the similarities as well as differences between GRT cultures and others'. For the Children's Centre team, the "Come and count with us" resource was said to have contributed to making the work on GRT culture "*integral*" to the overall work with all children.

### **KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS**

Interviewees reported the following key factors as components in the success of the resource production activity.

**Funding and publicity.** Adequate funding was made available and the project recovered costs through national sales. The conference and TESS networking had also been important to publicising materials.

**Quality.** The quality of the product was an important factor in its popularity and success.

The GRT parent commented that the fact that the materials were “*real*” contributed to the success. For non-Traveller children the book looked *exciting*, which helped people to overcome fear of the GRT community.

**Attitude and organisational support.** The TESS leader found that the Early Years group provided a ‘wider home’, and a supportive context for reciprocal partnership work, within the broader inclusion agenda.

**Contextual relevance.** The book stood out as attractive and relevant to people’s needs, and the CD fitted with wider school agendas e.g. working with interactive whiteboards.

**Processes of learning.** There were various stages of informal learning for those involved in resource production, including discussion around images, meeting GRT children in person and meeting families on the site, as well as discussion around the production tasks.

### CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Interviewees mentioned two areas as challenges for future resource production:

**Ongoing support/information requirement factors.**

It might, according to the Head of the EYCT, be important in future to buy in more support rather than over-rely on an enthusiastic lead person, e.g. a TESS professional, and in particular, it might be valuable to involve a member of the Traveller community more extensively in a paid role.

**Planning.**

It was noted the planning could have included all members of the production team throughout the process. For example, the GRT family were not so involved in the early stages of CD production.

## Case study F: informal learning and knowledge sharing around the GRT community through multi-agency forum meetings

### THE LEARNING ACTIVITY

#### Focus of the activity

In this case study, the majority of learning and knowledge sharing in relation to working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities occurred at multi-agency meetings. Three different multi-agency forums meet: a strategic-level forum, a front-line workers forum (called the social inclusion group) and also a forum for members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The head of the Traveller Education Support Services sits on the meetings at each of these levels and is able to feedback issues between meetings. It is also planned that representatives from the community forum will soon be present at the strategy-level meeting. These forums are reported to be important as they are locally based; sharing local good practice and addressing local issues and concerns.

The example that follows is drawn from interviews held with front-line professionals who attended the Social Inclusion group.

#### Who involved (e.g. which services)

The following organisations were represented at the Social Inclusion Forums; the Education department, [the LA] Safer Borough, Communities New Deal, Police, Housing, Site Manager for council maintained Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites, Youth Service, Adult Services, Sure Start and the Health Service.

#### Individual/service learning needs

The Education department (specifically the Traveller Education Service Support Team) which organises the inclusion group reported that the aims of the meetings were to: help move the borough forward in its provision for the community, share information and good practice, raise awareness of local issues, update each other on ongoing projects, share information on funding opportunities, source funding, share knowledge on national and regional initiatives.

Interviewees from Communities New Deal, the Education department, Site Management and The Police stated that their learning requirements from the forum, in order to be better able to work with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, were:

- To find out what else was happening, what others are doing, explore opportunities for joined up work and to learn from best practice
- To be able to find out what is going on in a concentrated format – *“it is much quicker to see all the services together than to visit them individually”*.
- To identify people with similar skills/interests who can work together on projects
- To provide a better service to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities by discussing together how to resolve issues
- To build contacts and networks in the other related services/organisations.
- To understand the wider role of the different services and more about the work of the different professionals present
- To discover projects and programmes that they can become involved with to break

down barriers and build trusting relationships with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

- To get to know each other on a personal and professional level.

#### **How the learning activity was organised**

The Group meetings were held every four to six weeks and the Education department set the agenda for each meeting. All the services involved were asked to provide suggestions for the agenda. The meetings were held in a relaxed informal manner and interviewees reported that they found them a comfortable forum for open discussions.

### **IMPACT OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY**

#### **Impact on knowledge**

*You can always learn from the forum as you can never have done everything yourself* (forum attendee).

Learning from the experiences of other colleagues on the forum was reported in discussions with forum attendees. Representatives of the Education department noted that more specific learning occurring at the meeting involved: developing an understanding of each other's roles, learning more about local families/issues, learning from other's experiences regarding how to approach these communities and breaking down misconceptions by sharing each other's knowledge. Other attendees commented that they had little knowledge or experience of working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities before attending the forum. They noted that the forums had enabled them to build their knowledge of the communities and to develop good practice by learning from other people's experiences. The forums also appear to be a good place to learn about the wider work of the other services and organisations that attend the meetings.

#### **Impact on skills/practice**

The overall feeling about the group was reported to be that it enabled the different services to work together or to advise each other on how to develop local initiatives or address local issues. Other specific examples of Impacts on skills/practice included:

- Attendees planned to use the group to gain advice on projects they were working on, for example the New Deal for Communities group is reported to be planning a display at a local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Fair and they have taken advice from others on the forum who had previously displayed at fairs.
- Other projects such as Youth Arts, Urban Voice and a DVD production with local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities were said to have all benefited from both sharing of knowledge and offers of direct support from services represented at the forums.
- The police service made people on the group aware of their 'tensions monitoring scheme', something not all attendees were previously aware of. This impacted on practice in terms with how services deal with any tension issues of which they became aware.
- The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community could request services via their forum which would then be directly fed back to the Social Inclusion Group. The link between the two forums was said to mean that the services provided to the local communities met their needs more efficiently and thoroughly.
- Learning from how others approach and work with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities was felt to ensure that professionals interact with these communities in

the most appropriate manner.

- Attendance at the forums was reported to directly impact on the service provided to the local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities as it is possible to signpost quickly to the appropriate person in the appropriate service.

The site manager reported that attendance at the Social Inclusion Group had direct impacts on the service they could provide. S/he commented that because of the networks and relationships that they had developed through the group, they could provide a much more professional service and were more able to make things happen. This was also reiterated by one of the representatives from the Education department who noted that the forum had enabled them to solve issues as they *“now know a man who knows a man”*, i.e. issues can be resolved by other members of the group.

#### **Sharing of learning with colleagues/wider Impacts**

The meetings were themselves an arena for sharing learning with colleagues, but examples where this learning is being shared more widely were also evident. Many attendees fed back information from the meetings to their management and colleagues. The knowledge gained by the police attendance at the forum was to be shared more formally. The intention was to build a cultural awareness package that they would then deliver to officers who work the local beats.

As discussed previously, there was also some important sharing of learning between the strategic, front-line and community forums. Feedback from the community forums had ensured that services that were delivered to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities met their actual needs. The site manager also commented that the local Gypsy Traveller community forum had been so successful that the group now attend a regional forum which provided feedback that could directly influence national thinking.

#### **KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS**

All forum attendees interviewed thought that the meetings had been very successful. The meetings had an informal atmosphere and everyone was able to openly contribute to discussion. Other reasons for success noted included:

- It was better to learn from discussion with other people
- Learning was shared
- As the meetings have become more successful more different services have attended
- People who attended were broad minded
- People openly engaged with each other and were willing to take on board what others said.

The site manager reported that meetings were a success as, by working together, they could achieve the aims of: ensuring that the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community (both housed, on sites and mobile) can access the same services as members of the non Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community; and improving service providers' knowledge of the community's needs and culture.

<p><b>CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED</b></p> <p>The overall consensus was that there was little need to improve the meetings. It was noted, however, that it would be valuable for: more services to attend, meetings to be more regular and meetings to be arranged when everyone could attend. Although some people felt that no additional training was required outside of the forum meetings, others noted that there was a need for more cultural awareness training, both for local authority and partner organisations.</p>

## Appendix 3: Record of Searches Undertaken

Search results for the period 2000 to 2008 yielded the following results. The first number shown in the bracket (in bold) is the number of sources that were identified that were most pertinent to the study. The second number shown in the bracket is the total number of sources identified (i.e. this includes those that were not relevant and does not take into account repeats):

- Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) (**6**) (14)
  - Index of articles from international English language social science journals.
- British Education Index (BEI) (**7**) (11)
  - References to 350 British and selected European English-language journals in the field of education and training.
- *ChildData* (**4**) (45)
  - Database produced by the National Children's Bureau.
- British Education Internet Resource Catalogue (**4**) (10)
  - Internet based database of information about professionally evaluated and described internet sites which support educational research, policy and practice.
- Social care online (**8**) (47)
  - The UK's most extensive database of social care information.
- Current Educational Research in the UK (CERUK) (**3**) (11)
  - A database of current or recently completed research in education and related disciplines.
- Social policy and practice (**6**) (42)
  - Containing a significant number of the references to grey literature and UK government publications.
- Criminal justice abstracts (**0**) (3)
- Scottish Government (**0**) (5)



## Appendix 4: The CWDC footprint

The CWDC footprint includes those working in the following roles in delivering services for children, young people and families.

- All those working in early years provision in:
  - playgroups
  - children's centres
  - day nurseries
  - nursery schools
  - nursery classes in primary schools
- Registered childminders
- Nannies
- Portage workers (a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children and their families requiring additional support)
- Foster carers, including private foster carers
- Children and families social workers
- Registered managers of children's homes, their deputies and assistants plus all residential child care workers
- Family centre workers
- Day centre workers
- Outreach/family support workers
- Learning mentors
- Education welfare officers
- Behaviour and education support teams
- Education psychologists and other therapists working with children
- Connexions personal advisers
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service family court advisers
- Lead inspectors of registered children's services within the footprint
- Support workers in the above settings
- Anyone who works with children and young people in the voluntary sector, including volunteers, who are not covered by another sector skills body

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