



**Approaches to working with children,  
young people and families for Traveller,  
Irish Traveller, Gypsy, Roma and Show  
People Communities**

**A literature review**

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) commissioned this literature review as the first part of a project exploring 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 project is intended to contribute to the CWDC's ability to support and develop the children's workforce. The main aim of the project was to conduct a literature review and supplementary 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.

## Key points from database searches

- There is a predominance of literature focussing on education and health provision - some of the job roles within these sectors do not fall within the CWDC footprint, but lessons for the workforce in general can be learnt.
- Initial searches of key words identified only a small number of relevant sources of literature.
- Whilst the selected literature addresses a range of issues around and approaches to working with Travellers, Irish Travellers, Gypsies, Roma and Showpeople, it is limited in the extent to which it describes the support, training and other programmes available to staff involved.
- Inferences can be made about training and support required by the workforce from the literature.
- Some of the limitations concerning the number of relevant sources and the weighting of evidence towards particular sectors suggest that the literature overall may not be fully representative of the range of current practice and training, much of which may be taking place below the radar of research.

## Focus of literature reviewed

- The literature covers a wide range of service areas, although a majority highlight the two service areas of education and health.

- The use of ethnic categories and terms is not consistent in the literature: in particular the term Gypsy/Traveller is used to refer to a variety of groups without this being consistently clarified.<sup>1</sup>
- The literature covers the six common core skills and knowledge for the children's workforce within the CWDC footprint i.e. *effective communication and engagement with children; supporting transitions; multi-agency working; safeguarding and child welfare; sharing information; children and young people's development*.
- There are far more articles focusing on *effective communication and engagement* than on any of the other skills areas.
- There is far less coverage of issues around *welfare and safeguarding*, and of *information sharing* between services.

The 25 articles which were reviewed in detail covered a range of themes around the CWDC core skills and knowledge:

- *effective communication*: e.g. the importance of building trust is highlighted and the value of distance-based learning is emphasised. The need for challenging discrimination and prejudice and for cultural awareness, and the importance of wider family engagement is stressed. The importance of understandings of the most appropriate media is also emphasised.
- *supporting transitions*: transition phases are highlighted at age 11 and 14 where school and parental expectations and desires may come into conflict, while the importance of outreach work with families is emphasised for early years work.
- *multi-agency work*: the establishment is recommended of inter-agency groups with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller representatives that have helped prevent counter-productive actions being taken such as families being forcibly moved on while schools are actively engaging with them. The value is explored of working with a key professional trusted by community; the importance is stressed of networking within and between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and professional communities
- *safeguarding and child welfare*: the importance is highlighted of viable tracking arrangements; acknowledging anxieties from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities about specific service remits e.g. Social Services
- *sharing information*: the need is emphasised for consistent monitoring and use of ethnic categories; the use of hand held records of educational history for mobile Travellers, and the use of ICT to support distance learning
- *children and young people's development*: the importance is highlighted of recognising family expectations of young people's learning and of

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<sup>1</sup> In this review, the generic term Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (GRT) is used, except where the literature is more specific, adopting terminology used by DCSF. With this terminology, Showpeople and Irish Travellers are included among Traveller communities.

developing their contribution to the family economy; and understanding the impacts of exclusion, discrimination and cultural nomadism on child, family and community development.

## Overview of current practice

Main themes in the literature which relate to current practice in delivering services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are summarised below.

## The views of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

- The importance was stressed of professionals understanding the work patterns and aspirations of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
- It was reported that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities would like professionals to be more flexible in coming to them and meeting their requirements. Histories of enforced movement with little notice and past legacies of inflexibility have contributed to this aspiration. Outreach is considered very important.
- 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.
- It was reported that 'learning' was considered different from going to school.

## The views of professionals

- The importance of a family-centred approach is emphasised. This involves taking full account of views and needs of parents when working with children. Approaches to working with families may vary according to the remit of the agency and professional involved.
- The *relationship between specialists and generalist* professionals needs clarifying to fit with 'mainstreaming' equality agendas i.e. the systematic consideration of the particular 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## Good professional practice

Some main themes concerning good professional practice include:

- Partnerships between service providers - co-located partnerships or partnerships between outreach specialists and generalists (e.g. between Traveller Education Support Service professionals and teachers) are far more effective in developing practice than specialists working in greater isolation.
- Community development - 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.
  - 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)
  - There is a need for training programmes to support sustainable development of community capacity.

## Training and support available to staff

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

- Most examples of training events concern *effective communication and cultural awareness* e.g. personalisation; engagement skills for outreach; understanding linkages between formally learned skills and self-employment opportunities; mediation.
- Trainers need to design training programmes with sensitivity to the local contexts of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and to the different professional groups involved.
- 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.
- Much current training and associated support work has been developed through specific initiatives of Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) professionals: there is a need for more systematic training with more input from other mainstream services.



## Effectiveness of training and support in specific contexts

A range of themes have been identified concerning the effectiveness of training. Each main theme is considered in turn while paying attention to the impacts of training and the success factors which appear to underpin examples of effective training:

- *Purposes and priorities.* Training appears to have suffered from having a low priority within policy and practice. *Impacts.* Long-term effectiveness of training has been reduced through lack of prioritisation. *Success factors.* The effectiveness of training depends in part on clarity of purpose and priority setting.
- *Changes to professional knowledge and skills.* *Impacts.* Positive impacts of training programmes can include changes to individuals' knowledge, skills and understanding e.g. of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families' support needs, the time required to meet these, and ability to transfer learning to the workplace. *Success factors.* 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.
- *Changes to organisations.* There is little evidence that organisational change as opposed to individual learning results from piece-meal training. *Impact.* 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. Improved partnership work is another goal, requiring organisational culture change. *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.
- *Involvement of community participants.* The literature suggests that co-working with community members (e.g. on development of distance learning materials) enhances the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes. *Impacts* of involvement of community members in training can include more well developed networks involving Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and providers, rising expectations, greater awareness of services, empowerment of community members through experience, formation of new community groups, and greater cultural awareness among providers. *Success factors* for involving community members include addressing status and power imbalances.

## Overarching challenges

The literature indicates a number of overarching challenges concerning current practice in service provision and delivery.

- *Developing long term and strategic approaches.* Key factors which inhibit longer term service development include: short term crisis management; issues around insecurity of accommodation; inter-organisational differences around data-sharing; lack of central involvement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in policy development; the need for a capacity building approach.
- *Information sharing.* Key concerns include inadequate ethnic monitoring and inter-organisational differences around data-sharing.
- *Complexities of cultural awareness.* Tensions persist around addressing the ambiguities of professionals' beliefs and understandings concerning cultural factors as an influence on good practice.
- *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.
- *Multi-agency work.* Developing multi-agency work can be challenging where the remits of different services can be dramatically divergent 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.
- *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.
- *Training.* There is a lack of evaluation of training or evidence of what works. Training is often underdeveloped, unsystematic and insufficiently resourced. The most appropriate balance and best fit between formal training and structuring informal opportunities also needs considering. Trainers may need more support; and more evidence is needed of how to implement Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' involvement in training effectively.

## Overview of key messages and concluding comments

Despite gaps and shortcomings in the evidence base, and a shortage of evidence evaluating training, the literature contains a number of key messages

for sustaining good practice, while implications for training, support and information can be inferred. Key themes include: developing a strategic approach to best, non-discriminatory practice; promoting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' engagement; formal training; informal learning opportunities; and support and information needs.

## **A strategic approach**

A strategic approach to development of best practice involves work with providers and with families. Sustainability issues are clearly highlighted: yet much best practice so far has depended on the work of highly motivated individuals and specialist services. Some key messages include:

- *Work with providers.* In addition to developing more culturally responsive children's services; there needs to be more effective linking between those involved in children's services and those responsible for broader policies (e.g. housing, planning). A strategic approach involves generating political will, (for example working with councillors and local officers to drive forward multi-agency working). The approach needs to be underpinned by the drive to challenge inequalities and discriminatory practice and ensure compliance with race relations law.
- *Work with parents, children and young people.* The heterogeneity of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities needs to be recognised with consideration of targeting training in a much more user focused way, e.g. taking fuller account of differences between groups. Practitioners need to engage with individual experiences while also developing cultural competence.
- *Sustainability.* Sustainable services depend ultimately on facilitating access to services without fostering dependency. Difficulties around access arise as much from families' perceptions of the inflexibility of services as from nomadism.
- *Developing multi-agency work.* Integrated, multi-agency work is viewed as very important to provision of effective services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

## **Promoting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' engagement**

Meaningful consultation with Gypsies and Travellers should form the basis for all developments.

- *Engagement and sustainability.* Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities engage with services if they see that successful and visible short-term

outcomes are achieved, which facilitates trust-building. Basic needs have to be addressed, concerning social justice and respect, e.g. around providing security of tenure.

- *Family members'* involvement in training and supporting their children's learning could achieve value-added benefits, introducing them to life-long learning opportunities.
- *Consultation* towards service development is needed both informally with individuals and groups of Travellers and more formally with Traveller organisations.

## Formal and informal learning

There is clearly a need for more systematic training:

- *Quality assured training programmes* are needed, with mainstream service/partnership and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' input, designed with sensitivity to key contexts around diverse professionals and diverse Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups.
- *Strategic embedding of training/awareness-raising* within broader organisational objectives and reinforcement through training of existing best professional practice are important in order to effect lasting organisational change.
- *Informal learning opportunities* are also very important, and can be anticipated and facilitated, for example through multi-agency work, joint visits to families, job shadowing, exchange visits and inter-school partnerships.

## Support

There is a need for improved information and support to trainers and professionals:

- Trainers may need more support with materials and guidance for developing courses.
- Professional networks need to be developed and supported as a means of exchanging information and providing support.
- Information should be more systematically and prominently provided on local authority websites.
- There is a need for improved training materials, with input from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller contributors.

- Lead officers in local authorities (e.g. Gypsy Liaison Officers) can, if appropriately trained themselves, play an important role in coordinating support.



# 1 Introduction

The Children's Workforce Development Council commissioned this literature review as the first part of a project exploring issues around and approaches to working with Travellers, Irish Travellers, Gypsies, Roma and Show people, and the support, training and other programmes available to staff involved. Recent research has detailed the extent of risk, deprivation and social exclusion among children and young people of Traveller, Irish Traveller, Gypsy, Roma and Showpeople communities (Parry et al., 2004). Many mainstream services have little experience of working effectively with them, their work being tailored to those living sedentary lives (Mason and Broughton, 2007). In education services, despite significant progress, issues of access, attendance and attainment remain 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). There is also a greater incidence of ill-health among Gypsies and Travellers than in any other ethnic group in the UK and poor service take-up (Parry et al., 2004). The Every Child Matters agenda and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) are drivers of change which require coordination of services, sharing of effective practice, and 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. This research is intended to contribute to the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)'s ability to support and develop the children's workforce.

## 1.1 Project aims

The main aim of the project was to conduct a literature review and supplementary 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 study will reflect the wider range of services working with children and families, including education services.

The project aimed to address a range of issues at different stages.

- 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?

## 1.2 Impact and outcomes

The project aimed to produce a review of 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.

## 1.3 Research design and methods

The research design overall comprised 2 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.
- The initiatives 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.



## 2 Overview of literature

### 2.1 Database searches

Searches of ten databases using key words relating to service type and levels of use, ethnicity and core skills and knowledge areas from 2000 onwards 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)

The searches yielded in total 188 sources. 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 closely related 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.

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. Further details are provided below.

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

The literature mapped to the CWDC core skills and knowledge areas in the following ways:

- **Effective communication and engagement with children, young people and families** (17 sources): e.g. the importance of building trust is highlighted and the value of distance-based learning is emphasised (Scottish Executive, 2003; Hester, 2004). The need for challenging

discrimination and prejudice and for cultural awareness, and the importance of wider family engagement is stressed.

- **Supporting transitions** (4 sources): e.g. transition phases are highlighted at age 11 and 14 where school and parental expectations and desires may come into conflict (Hester, 2004).
- **Multi-agency working** (4 sources): e.g. the establishment of inter-agency groups with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller representatives that have helped prevent counter-productive actions being taken such as families being forcibly moved on while schools are actively engaging with them (Scottish Executive, 2003).
- **Safeguarding and child welfare** (3 sources): e.g. cultural awareness work addressing myths and fears among Gypsies and Travellers around social work and the removal of children (Morran, 2001).
- **Sharing information** (3 sources): e.g. the use of hand held records of educational history for mobile Travellers, the use of ICT to support distance learning (Scottish Executive, 2003).
- **Children and young people's development** (1 source): e.g. literature highlighting the importance of recognising family expectations over young people's learning and developing their contribution to the family economy (Bhopal, 2004).

## 2.2 Key points/recommendations from database searches

- Initial searches of key words identified only a small number of relevant sources of literature.
- The summarised literature mapped onto each of the CWDC core skills and knowledge areas.
- There is a predominance of literature focussing on education and health - some of the job roles within these sectors do not fall within the CWDC footprint but lessons for the workforce in general can be learnt.
- Whilst the selected literature addresses a range of issues around and approaches to working with Travellers, Irish Travellers, Gypsies, Roma and Showpeople, it is limited in the extent to which it describes the support, training and other programmes available to staff involved.
- Inferences can be made about training and support required by the workforce from the literature.
- No literature was elicited through the CWDC E-Bulletin or emails sent to voluntary agencies via the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO). A small number of articles and grey literature were identified by the project consultant.
- Some of the limitations noted above concerning the scale and weighting of evidence suggest that the literature overall may not be fully representative of the range of current practice and training, much of which may be taking place below the radar of research.

## 3 Focus of literature reviewed

This section describes the focus of the literature in terms of services highlighted, client groups referred to, and skills areas covered. The extent to which the articles highlight training, support and information needs specifically is quite limited, but inferences can be drawn from the emphasis on current good practice and on challenges.

### 3.1 Services highlighted

The selected articles focus on a diverse mix of services. Of the 25 selected, nine have a primary focus on one service, while the remainder contain a substantial focus on at least two services. The selected literature includes the following sectors:

- Education, 14
- Health, 7
- Voluntary sector, 4
- Social Services, 3
- Leisure Services, 2
- Early Years, 2
- Accommodation/Housing, 2
- Probation, 1
- Police, 1
- Connexions, 1

The selection of relevant articles concerned with the Voluntary sector, Social Services, Early Years, and Connexions reflects the importance of these sectors within the CWDC footprint. The numbers of selected articles concerned with Education and Health reflects the high proportions of relevant articles which focus on those sectors. Sectors such as Accommodation/Housing and Police are also important in the context of GRT communities' experience of services.

### 3.2 Client groups

The use of ethnic categories and terms is not consistent in the literature, a finding that mirrors some of the patchy and inconsistent practices concerning information sharing and ethnic monitoring which the literature reported. Several articles specifically discuss their decision to use the term Gypsy,

Roma and Traveller communities to include a range of groups; e.g. English Gypsies, Welsh Gypsies, Scottish Gypsy Travellers, and Irish Travellers (Parry *et al*, 2004); or Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller (Treise and Shepherd, 2006). Other articles simply use Gypsy and Traveller or Traveller as generic terms without clarification. Some articles specifically highlight a concern with Showpeople (Kiddle, 2000) or fairground travellers (Kiddle, 2000); or 'fairground children' (in Hester, 2004); or Gypsy and Traveller communities, New (Age) Travellers, and Occupational Travellers (including the Showground community) (Scottish Executive, 2003). These latter articles draw attention to that fact that different communities have heterogeneous needs.

### 3.3 Skills areas covered

The selected articles cover the six core skills and knowledge areas (DfES, 2005) as used by CWDC. The six areas are *effective communication and engagement with children, young people and families, children and young people's development, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child, supporting transitions, multi-agency working, and sharing information*. While much of the literature includes a focus on more than one of the skills and knowledge areas, there are far more articles focusing substantially on *effective communication and engagement* than on any of the other skills areas. There is also substantial coverage of issues which could be subsumed under the themes of *multi-agency working* and of *children and young people's development*, and of *supporting transitions*. However, there is far less coverage of issues around *welfare and safeguarding*, and of *information sharing* between services. The central concerns within the literature are not always straightforward to categorise in relation to the core skills and knowledge areas. For example, a major theme in all the literature is 'cultural awareness'. Cultural awareness is frequently associated in the literature with effective communication, but it is also associated with the other core areas. Some key skills themes in the literature are summarised below, and explored in more detail in subsequent sections.

#### 3.3.1 Effective communication and engagement

The articles highlight a broad range of themes which can be subsumed under the heading of effective communication. There is a recurring emphasis on the

importance of ‘cultural awareness’ as a pre-requisite for building trust (e.g. McNeill *et al*, 2005; Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Professionals are said to require awareness of key cultural dimensions of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Without this awareness it is said that they would lack the effective communication skills for trust-building which are essential for working with Gypsy and Traveller children and families. The self-awareness of service organisational and professional cultures as influences on communication is also discussed, but less frequently, which means that the theme of cultural dissonance (Derrington, 2007) is not always examined. (Cultural dissonance is a term used to describe discord or conflict experienced by people in the midst of changes in their cultural environment. A secondary school is an example of a cultural environment which has developed over time through activities which create a culture of shared values, behaviours and material objects – the transition to a particular school culture then can lead to dissonance, as a result of conflicting expectations between home and school.) Many aspects of cultural awareness underpinning effective communication are mentioned. Taken altogether, the literature illustrates a complexity which individual articles do not always highlight, and including:

- *Histories of discriminatory practice* and conflict are discussed, concerning the importance of understanding discriminatory practice and anti-discriminatory legislation, and having the skills to manage conflict (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Organisational cultures and professional attitudes may vary between professionals within different services: for example high resistance to anti-racism interventions is said to have been characteristic of some police services. In such cases, training needs to remove the fear of the unknown and resolve conflict as these elements affect communication (Coxhead, 2004).
- *Complexities of identity* (for example around bicultural identity choices and cultural change in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities) need to be considered when communicating with service users (Derrington, 2007).
- *Wider engagement* is advocated. Good practice also involves communicating with the ‘settled’ community, less aware colleagues, and elected members to promote understanding and cohesion, and implicitly to challenge discriminatory attitudes and practice (Diacon *et al*, 2007).
- *The complexity of nomadism* is explored taking account of different types of accommodation used by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families (e.g. housing, local authority sites, private sites, roadside encampments; and reasons for using different types of accommodation (Morran 2001, McNeill *et al*. 2005). There is a need for more recognition when communicating with or about families that by no means all members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities travel routinely: in fact the majority live primarily sedentary lives (ODPM, 2004).

- *Managing the complexity and ambiguity of professional responses to cultural beliefs and behaviours of particular ethnic groups* as an influence on communication is a recurring theme. For example, in one study, some social workers referred to tension in working with minority groups between acknowledging and demonstrating respect for traditional beliefs and holding an awareness of what they viewed as other more restrictive aspects. Professionals also have to manage and work through the apparent tensions between remits and imperatives e.g. that of promoting social inclusion and that of respecting cultural diversity (Morran, 2002)
- *Understandings of different media* are important for communication and for their potential value in terms of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' cultural expectations, travel patterns and education. There is discussion of the value and place of ICT in traveller education (Padfield, 2006). ICT-supported learning was found useful to overcome the negative effects of interrupted learning and to improve access. It is important to understand how different media can be valued by families, in terms of their economy and lifestyle, while building on existing patterns of flexible and collaborative working with families and friends.
- *Partnership working with community members* is viewed as an essential means of developing trust and cultural awareness. A frequently advocated approach involves community engagement through which policy and practice is shaped through partnerships between Gypsy and Traveller communities and voluntary and statutory providers (Diacon *et al*, 2007). Effective communication with parents and families on the basis of equality is seen as an essential pre-condition to working successfully with children and young people (Mason and Broughton, 2007; Derrington, 2005; Kiddle, 2000). Family-based interventions fit with the continuity of a group's social and cultural identity (Bhopal, 2004). Close partnership working is one of the approaches which can enable professionals to build up trust. In this way they can be assisted to communicate with families in a personalised way that shows respect for commonalities with other families, (i.e. towards social inclusion) and, where appropriate, differences (i.e. towards cultural maintenance) (Hester, 2004).

### 3.3.2 Supporting transitions

The literature highlights key issues around supporting transitions from early years to school; from primary school to secondary school; and from school to work. Another dimension of transition concerns seasonal movement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, or Showpeople, which has implications for access to and delivery of services. Travel patterns and the impact of movement on access to services which were designed primarily for sedentary populations are emphasised (McNeill *et al*, 2005; Padfield, 2006). There is for example a need for professionals to factor in additional time for delivery to some client groups.

In early years work the importance of skilled outreach work with families, for example to prepare them for transitions to school, is emphasised. There is a range of views among professionals about the purposes of outreach, (Riches, 2007; Mason *et al*, 2006) and a clear understanding of the different purposes is recommended. Broadly, key purposes include:

- Outreach as a route to bring families into existing services
- Outreach as a means of delivering a tailored service direct to a family
- Outreach as a strategic approach to capacity building in a community

The transition between primary and secondary school is seen as a time when family and school expectations come into conflict. Power-sharing partnerships are viewed as a pre-condition of greater participation by Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople children in secondary education. Some more settled Gypsies feel forced to deny their heritage to fit with school ethos: which provides no basis for partnership (Kiddle, 2000). A recent longitudinal study of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students attending English secondary schools found that the less successful strategies used by students to deal with psychosocial stress associated with cultural dissonance and social exclusion included 'playing white' (passing identity by concealing or denying one's heritage), fight (physical and verbal retaliation and non-compliance) and flight (self-imposed exclusion) (Derrington, 2007). More adaptive strategies were found to include developing social support networks, and adopting a bicultural identity. Professionals need a greater understanding of the effects of cultural dissonance and racism on students during the transition time, and skills to support them in applying positive coping strategies.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents' aspirations concerning secondary education may be greater than formerly as they see the Traveller economy in transition (Bhopal *et al*, 2004). This is also discussed regarding Showpeople (Hester, 2004). However, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families expect education systems to be flexible and responsive, and to mesh with work and travel patterns (Padfield, 2006) and expectations around young people's future, which frequently does not occur. Retention is influenced by the following skills components: flexibility; effective communication and engagement with parents and families (Kiddle, 2000); holding high



expectations of students; and supporting participation in extra curricular activity (Derrington, 2005).

Transition by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people to post-16 education is also highly problematic, and challenges professionals to provide students with a context to which they can relate i.e. relevant to their occupational expectations (Hatley-Broad, 2004).

### **3.3.3 Multi-agency work**

The literature recurrently emphasises the importance of multi-agency working to deliver accessible and acceptable services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (Nacif, 2005; Treise and Shepherd, 2006; Scottish Executive, 2003). The potential value is identified for some professionals of working alongside others who already have the trust of families and communities (Treise and Shepherd, 2006). For example, mental health workers have a challenge gaining the trust of family members; trust can be expedited by working with the help and support of outreach workers.

The literature also includes discussion of the importance of networking, in multi-agency work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. For example on a Children's Fund project aiming to support the development of play and leisure opportunities for Gypsy and Traveller children and so support community capacity building aims (Mason and Broughton, 2007), it was viewed as important to use community networks to gain access to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and make contact with other families.

The nature of community networks needs consideration as there are likely to be diverse networks within and across different Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (for example there would be differences between Irish Traveller and Roma networks). In this context:

- multi-agency networks might offer consistent support to families – so providing links to mainstream services, and ensuring these would be inclusive in working with difference rather than expecting a cultural consensus to emerge.
- it would be important to focus on developing networks among services and between services and communities (Mason and Broughton, 2007).

The value is stressed of including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' representatives on multi-agency forums which have helped prevent counter-productive actions being taken such as families being forcibly moved on while schools are actively engaging with them (Scottish Executive, 2003). Collaboration between different professionals and services is also considered to have the potential to provide effective support for learning, for example through peripatetic (i.e. highly mobile) Traveller Education staff providing in-service training and facilitating staff development (Scottish Executive, 2003).

### **3.3.4 Safeguarding and child welfare**

A key theme in the literature is that ensuring protection and child welfare requires the establishment of viable tracking arrangements as Gypsies and Travellers move across service boundaries to ensure access to a range of relevant educational and support services (Hester, 2004). Professionals need the skills to achieve this in partnership with colleagues. There is the issue of attitudes of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families to particular statutory services, and of professionals within those services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' cultures. Settled travellers in particular may experience heightened anxiety from their proximity to services e.g. Social Services (Morran, 2001) principally because of their perceptions of an historical association with the removal of Traveller children. Self-reflection and awareness are required of professionals to engage with these issues.

Concerning health, there are recommendations from a variety of sources regarding targets for health of Gypsies and Travellers, financial incentives for GPs to meet these targets, and the value of national client held records (in Hester, 2004). Underlying these recommendations, the evidence concerning poor health of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities should be understood by professionals who work with them (Parry et al, 2004).

### **3.3.5 Sharing information**

Around information sharing, there are issues to do with consistent monitoring and use of ethnic categories which professionals need to be aware of. It is widely pointed out that ethnic monitoring information about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families is often not collected, and/or that it is often collected in an inconsistent way, with different groups conflated or groups omitted (Essex

County Council, 2004). The ambivalence of some professionals towards collection of information about ethnicity was aggravated by the sometimes very wary attitudes of Travellers to giving such information. Self-definition also varied from client to client which caused some confusion among professionals (Morran, 2002). Policy issues concerning the self-ascription of ethnicity and a range of associated strategies for promoting inclusion have recently been highlighted elsewhere (DCSF, 2008). For sharing information across services and geographical boundaries the use of hand-held health records has been piloted (McNeill *et al*, 2005). These records would be carried by family members so that they do not have to repeat the same story to different professionals.

### **3.3.6 Children and young people's development**

The literature touches frequently on issues concerning children and young people's development. There is considerable overlap with the extensive discussion of cultural awareness and effective communication which was highlighted above.

Some articles locate specific differences between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and mainstream cultures and their impact on children's development. For example, Gypsy children's sense of space is discussed by Kiddle (1999) – reviewed in Hester (2004). Attitudes to and use of indoor and outdoor space are discussed, and implications for service access and provision teased out. It is suggested that attitudes towards indoor space can contribute to feelings of restlessness in a classroom situation where a child is familiar with being outside for much of the day. Also practical limitations of space at home can in some cases limit the ability to support homework activity.

Several articles explore the complexities of situating an understanding of child development within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures and lifestyles. The importance of awareness but not stereotyping is highlighted (Hester, 2004). Developing cultural awareness means taking account of:

- dynamics of cultures – the views and expectations and practices of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families are changing in response to wider changes in society e.g. advances in technology and communication
- diversity of lifestyles and overlaps with other communities

- how this dynamism and diversity translates into particular contexts concerned with child development. (Hester, 2004)

One example of the complexity indicated above is the changing nature of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller views on and expectations of their children's education in response to changing views of the family work context and economic circumstances (Bhopal, 2004). There is specific emphasis in some literature on the importance of 'personalisation' of services rather than application of a one-size fits all cultural model. Personalisation takes account of individual choice and control over provision, and this is frequently discussed in terms of engaging with the perspectives and winning the trust of family members (Hester, 2004; Mason and Broughton, 2007; Riches, 2007).

Discussions of child development draw out the detrimental impact that experiences of exclusion and discrimination can have on the opportunities of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children to participate within mainstream services systems effectively. This exclusion can restrict their opportunity to develop social 'capital' i.e. the social networking resources which can help to open up opportunities for individuals, families and communities (Mason and Broughton, 2007).

There can be a close link between discriminatory practice, ineffective communication and lack of cultural awareness among providers, and the specific transitional events which may heighten 'risk', for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children's development. For example, the Showpeople community tends to travel from March to October. Many of their children enrol at a school during the winter and sometimes make use of primary schools when they stop at a town for a week or longer periods. This happens less frequently at secondary age when most young people are learning on-the-job skills. Cultural notions of childhood play a part here. While some parents may prefer younger children to remain at home longer than would be the case for sedentary families, older children may be expected to join the world of work sooner than in some sedentary families. At secondary school also, subject choices may not always be available, there may be little continuity between schools in the sequencing of subject teaching, and bullying is more common (Scottish Executive, 2003)

For Gypsies and Travellers there is also a link between the availability of suitable stopping places and levels of uptake of school places and pre-school

places. Gypsies and Travellers report incidences of stereotyping, racism and bullying as common occurrences and complain of discriminatory treatment from school staff. This can be a catalyst for withdrawal from school as Gypsy and Traveller parents often do not make formal complaints due to lack of knowledge of formal channels and having little expectation of support. (Scottish Executive, 2003).

In terms of core skills and knowledge, it can be inferred from the above that professionals need to develop a keen awareness of the diverse and complex influences on child development which can arise for children and young people of different ages, within different Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, including the possible influences of social exclusion and discrimination.

### 3.4 Key issues – focus of literature

- The literature covers a wide range of service areas, although a majority highlight the two service areas of education and health.
- The use of ethnic categories and terms is not consistent in the literature: in particular the term Gypsy/Traveller is used to refer to a variety of groups without this being consistently clarified.<sup>2</sup>
- The literature covers the six common core skills and knowledge for the children's workforce within the CWDC footprint i.e. *effective communication and engagement with children; supporting transitions; multi-agency working; safeguarding and child welfare; sharing information; children and young people's development.*
- There are far more articles focusing on *effective communication and engagement* than on any of the other skills areas.
- There is far less coverage of issues around *welfare and safeguarding*, and of *information sharing* between services.

The 25 articles which were reviewed in detail cover a range of themes around:

- *effective communication*: e.g. the importance of building trust is highlighted and the value of distance-based learning is emphasised. The need for challenging discrimination and prejudice and for cultural awareness, and the importance of wider family engagement is stressed. The

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<sup>2</sup> In this review, the generic term Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (GRT) is used, except where the literature is more specific, adopting terminology used by DCSF. With this terminology, Showpeople and Irish Travellers are included among Traveller communities.

importance of understandings of the most appropriate media is also emphasised.

- *supporting transitions*: transition phases are highlighted at age 11 and 14 where school and parental expectations and desires may come into conflict, while the importance of outreach work with families is emphasised for early years work.
- *multi-agency work*: the establishment is recommended of inter-agency groups with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller representatives that have helped prevent counter-productive actions being taken such as families being forcibly moved on while schools are actively engaging with them. The value is explored of working with a key professional trusted by community; the importance is stressed of networking within and between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and professional communities
- *safeguarding and child welfare*: the importance is highlighted of viable tracking arrangements; acknowledging anxieties from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities about specific service remits e.g. Social Services
- *sharing information*: the need is emphasised for consistent monitoring and use of ethnic categories; the use of hand held records of educational history for mobile Travellers, and the use of ICT to support distance learning
- *children and young people's development*: the importance is highlighted of recognising family expectations over young people's learning and developing contribution to the family economy; and understanding the impacts of exclusion, discrimination and cultural nomadism on child, family and community development.

## 4 Overview of current practice

This section provides an overview of main themes in the literature which relate to current practice in delivering services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, families and communities. The section first outlines the views of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities on their needs, and then summarises the views of professionals and service providers. The section then focuses on a range of areas involving good professional practice such as: promoting professional practice in overcoming cultural misunderstandings and promoting access to services; modelling partnerships; community engagement; and accounts of specific multi-dimensional projects which model innovative practice.

### 4.1 Views of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families on their needs

A small number of papers include evidence of the views of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families about their own needs. A number of main themes emerge, concerning the social and economic needs and aspirations of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (i.e. needs and aspirations concerned with both social and financial well-being), the importance of flexibility in service delivery, aspirations for learning, and the value of family-focused provision, in the context of experiences of discrimination.

One theme concerns the importance of professionals understanding the *social and economic needs and aspirations* of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. In one study, of Gypsy Travellers' health promotion experiences, needs and preferences, (Papadopoulos and Lay, 2007), findings from focus group discussions indicated that 'Gypsy Travellers see improvement in socio-economic conditions as a primary need'. Participants preferred health promotion provided locally. Health promotion practitioners who are attuned to local conditions and willing to work on Gypsy Travellers' terms are needed, as are changes in health and social policy to improve their socio-economic conditions and reduce health inequalities.

A further theme, related to access, is that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families would like professionals to be more *flexible* in coming to them and meeting their requirements. Professionals may have to initiate access because of issues

such as enforced movement and mistrust arising from legacies of professionals' attitudes. Outreach is considered very important. Lessons learned in focus groups involving women attending drugs awareness sessions include (Donnelly, 2003):

- Services sometimes need to go to clients
- Materials used need to be appropriate but communication should not necessarily be only word-of-mouth

As an example of the importance of flexibility, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller participants in the health promotion study (Papadopoulos and Lay, 2007) stated that poor access to health promotion arose not only through difficulties in finding GPs willing to see them but through lack of access to culturally appropriate health promotion materials (e.g. materials that are visually attractive, present positive visual images of GRT communities, and contain clear language without 'jargon') which are not consistently available. Some health services were difficult to get to without private transport, and participants wanted health promotion services to come to them. In another example, a study of women Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members' views of mental health requirements and services found that the workforce should be more flexible with options for home visits, appointments at local surgeries and telephone contact. The women highlighted that mental health workers wishing to gain trust among the Traveller community would require support from outreach workers already trusted by the community (Treise and Shepherd, 2006).

The importance of flexibility is also highlighted in research around the use of appropriate support for *managing transitions* e.g. between primary and secondary school, between school and the worlds of work and adult education, and also between different localities and settings. Research with Gypsy and Traveller pupils and Showground Traveller pupils who are highly mobile at least for part of the year, focused on their experience of ICT and its support for their learning in schools (Padfield, 2006). This research is relevant to highly mobile families, not to those families whose lifestyles are more settled. The research found that ICT supported learning helped to overcome the negative effects of interrupted learning and to improve access. Families' accounts of patterns of travelling are analysed to reveal a continuum of predictability in relation to travelling from *relatively predictable* (as applied to Showpeople) to



*hurriedly made decisions to move on* (as applied for example to Gypsies in roadside encampments) (Padfield, 2006). But patterns are modified to ensure children did not miss schooling. The implications of these accounts are considered, principally stressing the importance of flexible service delivery.

‘Learning’ was considered different from going to school. Families provide *learning experience*, in the context of social and cultural bonding within communities, and support for obtaining relevant employment. Pupils’ comments lend support to applying ‘blended learning approaches’ i.e. a combination of IT supported distance learning and face-to-face contact. They valued a regular learning/teaching relationship with teachers, so that ICT learning should include both face-to-face interaction and email or telephone contact. The concerns about blended learning pointed to retaining a base school, and/or a designated support teacher. At the same time, according to this research (Padfield, 2006), ICT-aware pupils who are highly mobile (i.e. not settled Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities)

- welcomed the idea of a personal USB memory stick
- described using computers as less tiring than working with pen and paper
- gave examples showing that they could transfer skills to different areas of their lives.

A further theme in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller interviews is that the model of service provision which Gypsies and Travellers want should be *family-focused* rather than only individual-focused. A study of changing needs and perceptions of Gypsy Travellers and education (Bhopal, 2004) shows that parents felt that family-based learning fits with sustaining a group’s social and cultural identity. As an example, offering adult literacy classes to Gypsy Traveller parents in primary school was popular with parents.

Where Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents described positive views of encounters with professionals, these were often with Traveller Education Service staff (Bhopal, 2004; Riches, 2007; Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Positive aspects of their work, in the view of Gypsy Travellers, include:

- Securing links and positive relationships between families and school
- Providing a means of reconciling divergent expectations of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families and teachers to reduce cultural dissonance.

## 4.2 Views of professionals/service providers

There are a number of themes within the literature concerning the views of professionals on their own needs. A recurrent theme again concerns the importance of *working with families*. For example, the outreach approaches advocated by early years practitioners (Riches, 2007; Mason *et al.*, 2006) are highly family focused. Approaches to working with families may differ according to the remit of the agency and professional involved. Social workers who may have difficulties developing trust with some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families saw value in three different strategies (Cemlyn, 2000):

- family centres based on open access and user involvement
- development of specialist outreach work - as a foundation for engaging with Travellers informally in their own space
- partnership with specialist provision offered by the voluntary sector to support access to family support services.

Another theme in professionals' accounts concerns clarifying and developing professional roles in working with Gypsies and Travellers. The *relationship between specialists and generalist* professionals was raised as a concern by professionals. In some service areas, key professional roles have the potential to provide opportunities for trust-building. Achieving this depends on whether the remit of the role involves any major perceived or actual conflict of interest between the agency and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller family or community. For example, in accommodation-related services, it is sometimes said that site managers are well placed to play this role. However, this is debateable if there is conflict between the remit of the landlord agency i.e. the local authority re: rent-collecting, and representing the interests of the community. Traveller Liaison Officers (TLAs) can sometimes play the role of bridging between a community and the accommodation services, as well as with other services. If an appropriate appointment is made, TLAs can be well-placed to encourage an approach to site management which views the rights and requirements of site residents in the same way as would apply for housed tenants; with a commitment to consultation (Warrington and Peck, 2005).

In education, part of the success of the Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) is attributed to their outreach work engaging with parents and families,

as well as their efforts to provide inset to professionals in schools (Warrington and Peck, 2005). Yet it is recognised by TESS professionals that they should not be substituting for other professionals. Schools over-rely on TESS to liaise with and build partnerships with Traveller families: role-clarification is required – and very few schools carry out an audit of current provision to promote positive images of Travellers (Derrington, 2005).

Professionals also highlighted particular aspects of *communication* that were important. The skills highlighted are broadly those which professionals in any case need to do their work, but with a specific contextual focus on Gypsies' and Travellers' lifestyles. 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). Key points include:

- *Clarity* – set realistic expectations
- *Flexibility* – listen to individuals and families, show understanding of their lives and values

### 4.3 Good professional practice

The literature contains recurring themes concerning good and effective practice. Some of the main themes include:

- Partnerships between service providers.
- Community engagement – partnerships between communities and providers; applying a community development model and working through community networks; use of one-stop shops; outreach models; employing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller adults in professional roles
- Descriptions of specific projects which model innovative practice.
- Blended learning approaches in ICT use.

#### 4.3.1 Partnerships between service providers

Partnerships in service delivery are described with two main approaches highlighted. One approach involves partnership between different agencies and professionals delivering services. Here, there are examples where a

professional trusted by the community e.g. a TESS worker plays a key ‘specialist’ link worker role between family community and other services, as described above.

Other examples are supplied where different agencies develop a multi-agency approach to service delivery without any specialist taking the lead. A co-located service initiative is described in Nacif (2005). Here, Oxfordshire County Council set up a multi agency service for Gypsy and Travellers services in 2003. The service is a partnership between the county council, five district councils, the police and the TESS. An interesting dimension of this project was its wider focus on community cohesion.

To reduce tension between settled and Traveller communities, to promote social inclusion, and to raise awareness of the legitimacy of Travellers’ lifestyle the council created a one stop shop for anyone needing help or advice on any issue relating to Travellers. A multi-agency team was established comprising a Traveller site manger, a Traveller liaison officer, and a health advocate. Key recommendations concerning multi-agency services in this report include (Nacif, 2005):

- Co-located partnerships are far more effective and efficient than a single team working in isolation
- Make sure partnership protocols are in place.
- Devise clear lines of management and accountability
- Many partnership working issues require time to resolve

In the literature, partnership projects were described with far-reaching goals and objectives, going well beyond promotion of access for families to single services, or improving service procedures and practice. The dimensions of these projects have implications for training and learning around:

- the potential for multi-agency training and/or learning
- the importance of a strategic community and integrated service development approach
- the value of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities’ involvement

A closer look at some of these projects indicates a range of strategic and operational dimensions for good practice going beyond the skills and

knowledge areas for supporting frontline delivery to families, and including those of community capacity building, and service capacity building. For example, a partnership project in the Highlands, the Initiative on Promoting the Health and Well-being of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Highland was funded for three years, from April 2002-March 2005 (McNeil *et al*, 2005). The project had a focus on:

- building foundations
- strategic promotion of change rather than new ways of providing services
- client driven development

Its underlying approach:

- moved away from short term, single service provision by individual professionals
- emphasised family-based, holistic views of health and wellbeing
- looked to sustainability
- followed a community development model

Objectives included:

- improved access
- promote health, well-being and inclusion
- facilitate development of policy and practice in statutory services

The evaluation of the initiative also highlighted integrated multi-agency work. For example, it highlighted a Health education and promotion course piloted by an Education Development Officer and a Community Specialist Practitioner together. The project found:

- a need for greater integration of service structures and across agencies.
- greater integration could provide the first basis for developing *appropriate multi-agency training*
- greater integration would lead to better possibilities for *pooling expertise, and converting awareness into practice within and across services*

Another partnership project discussed in the literature (Mason *et al*, 2006) involved the development of a regional consortium of providers of play and

leisure opportunities aiming to provide play and leisure for children, and to raise awareness and capacity within existing services. The Consortium employed Development Officers (DOs) each of whom worked across two Childrens' Fund areas. They aimed to:

- raise awareness among service providers
- develop service capacity
- support access to leisure facilities
- raise awareness among parents of local services
- change perceptions in the settled community.

The evaluation of this project concludes that:

- community capacity building work as well as service capacity building is highly important, since the long-term sustainability of many projects which facilitate supported access to facilities is in doubt.

There is interdependence between service partnership development and community capacity development. Training needs to expedite among professionals and managers at both frontline and strategic levels the ability to support sustainable development of community capacity. For example, in the evaluation of the Highlands Initiative (McNeil *et al*, 2005) it is commented that:

- Gypsies and Travellers who are empowered through community capacity work still required professionals who could play a bridging role, either:
  - As dedicated Outreach workers with no specific service attachment
  - Posts more embedded in particular services
- Service based changes would only be sustainable with wider community changes.

#### **4.3.2 Community engagement – community-provider partnerships**

There are two main levels at which the theme of community development is introduced:

- Operational: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members working alongside professionals to develop/deliver services and/or training

- Strategic: Tailoring service partnerships to focus on community development / capacity building objectives

The literature provides a small number of examples of the operational practice level, whereas at the strategic level much of the discussion concerns what should happen rather than what is happening.

One approach with positive implications for capacity building at individual, community and service levels, involves community members working alongside professionals. Examples of this approach include:

- Operational level: *Partnership delivery* of training
  - Training for police was devised between Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group and a Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer and implemented with involvement of contributors from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (Coxhead, 2004)
  - Members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities visited schools to raise awareness of staff and pupils – this enhanced the self esteem of communities (Scottish Executive, 2003); employing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities parents as classroom assistants (Warrington and Peck, 2005)
  - Save the Children's Early Years Gypsy, Roma and Traveller project delivered early years cultural awareness raising and inclusion training as a pilot since 2004. Links were made with Derbyshire Gypsy-Liaison Group and Ormiston Children and Families Trust. Delivering training with a community member promoted capacity building in the community (Riches, 2007).

At the more strategic level of conceptualising good practice in developing capacity in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, approaches are advocated rather than evaluated which highlight that improved partnership arrangements *could* enhance community capacity. In turn, this could have positive effects on community capacity to contribute to delivery of training. Examples include:

- Strategic: Community / voluntary sector involvement in developing partnerships / services
  - *Network building*: A review of a regional consortium of providers of play and leisure opportunities initiative recommends that Gypsy and Traveller networks should be mobilised. Good practice would develop partnerships between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities networks and provider networks. The lack of such connections for

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities can be understood as lack of ‘bridging’ and ‘linking’ social capital. (Mason and Broughton, 2007)

- *Forums*. Local Authorities should create and facilitate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller forums to support community development and engagement. (Diacon *et al*, 2007)
- *Capacity building for training/co-working*. There is a need for greater capacity building among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities so they can play a part in diversity training and be employed within services. (Diacon *et al*, 2007; McNeill *et al*. 2005)

### 4.3.3 Projects which model flexible and innovative practice

A small number of innovative projects are discussed below which provide greater illustrative detail and contextual discussion of the key themes which have already been introduced in this section around flexible practice, outreach, and family-focused provision.

Patterns of travel for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families vary according to a range of factors including work requirements, nomadism as a cultural or family choice, and preferences or contingencies of accommodation (e.g. enforced movement, and refusal of planning permission on private sites).

The seasonal variation in travel patterns also differs between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Showpeople, for example, travel seasonally and predictably in the summer months for work, while regularly spending winter in established winter yards. The consequences of these variations also impact on access to services.

One project, previously mentioned, involves research with highly mobile Gypsy and Traveller communities and Showpeople relating to their experience of ICT and its support for their learning in schools (Padfield, 2006). The project found that good practice is flexible to take account of a number of key factors:

- *the patterns of movement of particular groups*, and underlying factors
- *community models of understanding of process and need* e.g. . ‘Learning’ was considered different from ‘going to school’.
- *impacts of service factors* on service use
- *variation* in impact on service use / experience among groups.



The project found that effective ICT based learning was *flexible* and *responsive* along several dimensions:

- blended (i.e multi-faceted) approaches are effective
- learning works when *embedded in culturally supported social and work activity*. *Connectivity* (being linked up by ICT) was viewed by most as helping to maintain *social contacts* with teachers and friends at school
- ICT supported opportunities were likely to build on existing *flexible, interactive and collaborative working* with relatives and friends
- *synchronicity* of learning in terms of time and space patterns is important: pupils from *both communities* welcomed being able to prepare school assignments at a time that fitted with families' life style
- family members' involvement in training and supporting their children's learning could achieve value added benefits, introducing them to life-long learning opportunities

A second report analyses an outreach work project aimed at engaging the traveller community with drug services (Donnelly, 2003). Initial liaison between the community and one drug worker led to awareness sessions and the expansion of drug service provision on site. A drug worker met young people at a coffee bar near the Travellers' site, and subsequently began to visit nursery provision on the site. He was approached by one of the mothers who wanted information on drugs. From this, six drug awareness sessions were held in the nursery. *'This has led to some young people receiving regular confidential support.'*

Winning trust of family members (women) and showing flexibility to meet them on their own terms allowed the drug worker to make progress with young drug users. Key factors in success include:

- *Outreach* – professionals take services to the community
- *Flexible communication approaches* - literacy skills should be assessed; do not assume that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities cannot read: ensure that material used is accessible
- *Perseverance and awareness* - the professional is an outsider and will always remain one

A review of outreach work, (Riches, 2007), draws on experiences of practitioners within Traveller Education Support Services and in Sure Start Children Centres including partnership projects. The article reflects work of

practitioners working outreach with children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. A number of key themes resonate with those in the discussion of specific projects above. These include:

- *Flexibility commitment and support* - these qualities are required to overcome barriers of: geographical isolation; mobility and travel patterns; transport; lack of familiarity with sites; safety and security concerns; shortage of resources; views on parental roles; preferences for on-site provision; communication and literacy.
- *Gains of partnership work* - integrated provision provides greater capacity for outreach; key workers establish trust.
- *Variations of outreach structure provision* - there is no one-size-fits-all model.

## 4.4 Key issues – Overview of current practice

### 4.4.1 Views of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities groups

- The importance was stressed of professionals understanding the work patterns and aspirations of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities would like professionals to be more flexible in coming to them and meeting their requirements. Histories of enforced movement with little notice and past legacies of inflexibility have contributed to this aspiration. Outreach is considered very important.
- 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.
- 'Learning' was considered different from going to school.

### 4.4.2 Views of professionals

- The importance of a family centred approach is emphasised. Approaches to working with families may differ according to the remit of the agency and professional involved.
- The *relationship between specialists and generalist* professionals needs clarifying to fit with 'mainstreaming' equality agendas i.e. the systematic consideration of the particular 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.
- 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.

- The importance is emphasised 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.

#### 4.4.3 Good professional practice

Some main themes concerning good professional practice include:

- Partnerships between service providers - co-located partnerships or partnerships between outreach specialists and generalists (e.g. between Traveller Education Support Service professionals and teachers) are far more effective in developing practice than specialists working in greater isolation.
- Community development - 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.
  - 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)
  - There is a need for training programmes to support sustainable development of community capacity

## 5 Models of training and support available to staff

The extent to which the literature highlights training, support and information needs specifically is quite limited, as stated earlier. 10 out of the 25 articles initially selected for detailed review gave some account of recent training, but several of these were incidental rather than substantial. Other articles (5) gave accounts of current practice leading to recommendations about training. The remaining articles (10) described current practice in such a way that implications for training can clearly be inferred from them.

The following sections briefly discuss the initiatives in terms of a number of themes. These include: *development of key skills for particular groups of professionals; contexts informing design of training; formal training; informal learning opportunities; the place of specialist workers e.g. TESS professionals; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller involvement.*

### 5.1 Development of key skills for particular groups of professionals.

The purpose and focus of training varies somewhat according to professional group. However, most examples concern *effective communication and cultural awareness*. Some examples for Connexions Advisors include:

- context-sensitivity; personalisation; engagement skills for community outreach; understanding time-frames; flexibility; understanding linkages between formally learned skills and self-employment opportunities (The Connexions Traveller Education Support Services Alliance, 2006).

A different example concerns the key skills required to carry out mediation work. Pavee Point in Ireland is one cited example of an effective mediation project. A mediator creates an opportunity for people to listen to each other when normal lines of communication have broken down. It encourages members of the Traveller and settled communities to develop creative responses to conflict (Diacon *et al*, 2007). This is viewed as important for promoting community cohesion in the context of legacies of mistrust. Mediation services have been shown, with effective training, to create benefits much wider than the original issues, including in the case of Pavee Point,

formation of residents' committees, a framework for improved communication, a reduction in the number of police interventions required on the estate, and a general increase in positive energy amongst residents. It is clearly important for the mediator to enjoy the trust of both sides, being perceived to take a balanced and fair approach.

## 5.2 Understanding contexts

Trainers need to apply an analysis of relevant contexts to the design of training programmes. The contexts include those of professionals: their institutional remits, and professional values and working assumptions; and those of diverse Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Taking account of the institutional settings where professionals' work, one article highlights the importance for training programmes with police staff of providing theoretical explanations of prejudice and racism, which consider values and 'cognitive dissonance' – the feeling of uncomfortable tension which comes from holding two conflicting thoughts in the mind at the same time, for example negative attitudes based on upbringing and positive attitudes based on policy or direct experience. In a specific local institutional context where, it is said, 'racist language/locution could be overt', key points highlighted include:

- targeting prejudice (making a negative judgment about a person based on their race, before receiving information relevant to the particular issue on which a judgment was being made) rather than stereotypes (conventional and oversimplified conceptions, opinions, or images, based on the assumption that there are attributes that all members of the other group hold in common)
- designing interventions for participants to have an effect on the subconscious rather than only the conscious level of their information processing (assuming that prejudice involves subconscious elements)
- finding a way of supporting participants by intercepting the flow of their thought processes to encourage reflection after the experience
- contributors from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are involved in delivering training (Coxhead, 2004).

Preceding sections have illustrated the issues of context-sensitivity concerning Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families cultures and lifestyles. Implications for training can be inferred from these issues; for example, around the cultural

knowledge and communication / engagement skills required to provide support to highly mobile children and families (Hatley-Broad, 2004). This involves:

- awareness of the factors underlying mobility for work for different groups e.g. Showpeople who gain their livelihood by working at funfairs particularly from March to November
- awareness of possible cultural preferences for nomadism
- awareness of legal and policy factors which can lead to homelessness e.g. enforcement and refusal of planning permission on private land.

### 5.3 Formal training

In a national survey of Initial Teacher Education, just over half of student/trainee teacher respondents did not have any specific training or guidance about the particular needs of Gypsy/Traveller pupils in school (Derrington, 2005). There are in fact very few attempts in the literature to describe systematically a formal training programme so that it could be replicated, which may reflect the lack of systematic programmes. One such programme is described in Riches (2007). The training model is intended to support TESS early years advisory teachers in providing early years professionals with outreach work skills using an 'outreach work model'. The model is presented with key headings that include:

- who in the community is excluded from services
- quality assurance processes
- specialist understandings needed
- available partnerships
- potential for work shadowing
- need for professional understanding
- organisation of outreach; resources, tools and guidance required
- skills, aptitudes and qualifications requirements
- monitoring quality and outcomes
- sharing work and supporting other services: e.g. engaging with issues around high intensity support work over long periods and dependency, need for linking to wider networks of support, exit strategies

The training initiatives which have been developed are grounded in a systematic and context-sensitive analysis of outreach work: drawing on key precepts; i.e.

- Models of outreach have to be understood.
- Barriers around knowledge; location; attitudes; communication need to be understood.
- Integrated provision and partnership approaches provide greater capacity.
- A key worker can establish outreach work and build trust with families.
- Good outreach requires an effectively planned and holistic approach.

The approach modelled here does what few other training initiatives reported in the literature achieve, setting training systematically within a wider strategic context of service development planning.

## **5.4 Informal learning**

Several opportunities for informal learning are briefly mentioned in the literature. These include recommendations for

- job shadowing
- exchange visits between different service managers and professionals
- co-operation between different schools to develop expertise (Essex County Council, 2004)
- opportunities for learning through multi-agency work (Scottish Executive, 2003).

However, the theme of informal learning, which is mentioned extensively in the local authority documents on current practice, appears to have attracted less academic interest, judging from the incidental way the recommendations listed here occur in the literature. The potential of partnership and multi-agency work to support opportunities for informal learning would bear further investigation.

## **5.5 The place of specialist workers e.g. TESS professionals**

A majority of current training appears to be led by professionals from Traveller Education Support Services, who have developed individual initiatives themselves, rather than in response to systematic policy, planning or

commissioning. There are detailed accounts of TESS advisory teachers providing early years training (Riches, 2007); and support and training provision to education professionals (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). Roles of TESS teams include: in-school support for students and staff including advisory work; and curriculum focused support. However, concerns are expressed that mainstream services should be more proactive rather than over-relying on TESS (Derrington, 2005).

## 5.6 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller involvement

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' involvement in community development work and service provision is frequently advocated and analysed in the literature. There is far less about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller involvement in training. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members' involvement in training within service providing agencies can include input in both a trainer and a facilitator role, with the potential to enskill those involved as trainers, and create a community ripple effect (MacNeil *et al*, 2005). There are also reports of travellers being trained to co-deliver services. For example, traveller women were given training to provide community based health services to their own community in partnership with public health nurses (Parry *et al*, 2004).

More generally the advocacy of community capacity-building in the literature, the widespread discussion of the challenges of engendering cultural awareness, engagement and trust building (e.g. Mason and Broughton, 2007, Mason *et al*, 2006), and the emphasis on working sympathetically with families, all strongly suggests a role for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members in training.

## 5.7 Key issues – models of training and support

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

- Most examples of training events concern *effective communication and cultural awareness* e.g. personalisation; engagement skills for outreach; understanding linkages between formally learned skills and self-employment opportunities; mediation.



- Trainers need to design training programmes with sensitivity to the local contexts of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and of the different professional groups involved.
- 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.
- Much current training and associated support work has been developed through specific initiatives of Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) professionals: there is a need for more systematic training with more input from other mainstream services.

## 6 Effectiveness of training and support in specific contexts

Less than half of the articles reviewed in detail (10 out of 25) made reference to the effectiveness of training, and where effects are claimed and discussed the amount of empirical evidence offered in support is quite limited. A range of themes have been identified concerning the effectiveness of training. Each main theme is considered in turn while paying attention to the impacts of training and the success factors which appear to underpin examples of effective training.

### 6.1 Capacity building

Some projects are described in the literature which have a goal of capacity-building for the future. Capacity building includes human resource development re: skills and understandings, and organisational development. The focus of capacity building can be directed towards services, or communities, or both. In these cases, training is only one aspect of a wider project, and its effectiveness needs to be examined in the context of the project objectives.

#### *Impacts of training*

Training appears to have suffered from having low priority within policy and practice. In capacity building projects, unless there is strategic clarity, there is always a risk that other apparently more pressing aims will crowd out training components. For example, in one programme, cultural awareness training with providers was a component in the work of a Regional Consortium of Children's Fund partnerships working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities families to enable access to early years play and leisure services (Mason and Broughton, 2007; Mason *et al*, 2006). In this context, the authors conclude, the project goals were not sustainable: instead of focusing on provision, (i.e immediate access for individual families) it would work better to focus on developing networks among services and between services and communities.

#### *Success factors*

The effectiveness of training towards capacity building depends in part on clarity of purpose and priority setting. In the programme described above, the

effectiveness of training work was crowded out by more attention being paid to the priority of working directly with children to promote access (Mason and Broughton, 2007). There was confusion over the purpose of sessions, and over specifying the audiences which sessions were aimed at. Sessions were not fully inclusive, in that measures were not taken to ensure that less well resourced or networked services attended (Mason *et al*, 2006). Inferences can be drawn for training highlighting the importance of:

- taking a strategic approach to capacity building and sustainability
- training for work with parents as well as children
- embedding training within sustainable development goals e.g. developing Gypsy and Traveller and service networks

## 6.2 Changes to professional knowledge, skills and attitudes

Several areas are identified where training is reported to have had an impact on professionals. Since most of the reported training falls under the umbrella heading ‘cultural awareness’, more effective engagement would be a predicted outcome. One example where this was clearly intended was the partnership training devised between Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group and a Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer (Coxhead, 2004). The approach was focused on the police context and anti-racism interventions. High resistance had been a common feature, training aimed to remove fear of the unknown and resolve conflict – leading to attitude change. The training focused on preparing police for working with hard-to-reach groups. Training approaches varied - there was entry level, facilitator training for working with community groups, event/role specific training, and specialist/strategic level learning.

### *Impacts*

Among the positive effects claimed for this programme are:

- changes to knowledge/skills/understanding and attitudes
- ability to transfer learning to work place

The knowledge/skills areas which were changed are not detailed thoroughly in many articles. In some cases, project work included a training component with cultural awareness elements e.g. around travel patterns and support needs. For example the effects of a time-limited project, aimed at stimulating community

development and capacity building, which included awareness raising with services providers, (McNeill *et al*, 2005) included:

- Greater awareness among service providers.
  - Acknowledging the need to give adequate time to planning.
  - Awareness of the need to provide culture sensitive delivery, according to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families' own priorities.
  - Understanding of time and support needs required to take account of traditional travelling patterns.

Other attitudinal outcomes are mentioned in the limited number of articles which refer to effects on professionals, specifically concerning motivation. Anecdotal evidence is presented that training initiated by a particular member of staff with a special interest and good links with specialists could lead to education staff developing their interest further (Derrington, 2005). This change could impact on organisational culture.

#### *Success factors.*

Successful training appears to draw on a coherent analysis of context and of purpose preceding development of the programme. The partnership training referred to above between Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group and a Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer had a clear pedagogical underpinning and awareness of the specific organisational culture and professional values permeating the client group. Materials take account of theoretical explanations of prejudice and racism, around values and 'cognitive dissonance'<sup>3</sup> (Coxhead, 2004). Community contributors are centrally involved, in an approach which aimed to stimulate reflection. The emphasis is on a partnership thematic approach, 'Pensar' which is a Gypsy word for to 'think'. For this kind of programme to succeed, by highlighting prejudice and anti-discriminatory practice, subconscious processes and the complexity of cultural understandings there is an apparent need for (Coxhead, 2004, Derrington, 2005):

- Support to trainers
- Community participation
- Appropriate training materials

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<sup>3</sup> Cognitive dissonance means the feeling of uncomfortable tension which comes from holding two conflicting thoughts in the mind at the same time, for example negative attitudes based on upbringing and positive attitudes based on policy or direct experience.

### 6.3 Changes to organisations

The academic literature overall provides little discussion of the effects of training on organisations: i.e. how the strategic embedding of training within organisational structures and development impact on culture and practice within an organisation.

The exceptions concern two projects reviewed in the literature, the National Evaluation of the Children's Fund consortium project (Mason and Broughton, 2007) and the initiative on 'Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Highland' (McNeill *et al*, 2005). In these reports, impacts on organisations are described, but the impacts of training/awareness-raising work with services providers are not easily teased apart from impacts of other dimensions, most obviously community engagement, and capacity building.

#### *Impacts*

A key dimension of impact on organisations concerns promotion of '*mainstreaming*' of policies and practice concerned to promote equality of provision. Mainstreaming is concerned with promoting equitable services and involves systematic consideration of the particular effects of all policies and practices in terms of equality, rather than only those concerning specialist or one-off project provision, at the point of planning, implementation and evaluation. For example, the Highland initiative claimed success in linking into the mainstreaming of provision in two ways:

- Project work affected 'mainstream' support in education.
- Smaller numbers were also newly linked into mainstream support in out-of-school and post-secondary contexts.

A further area of possible impact concerns improved *partnership work*. This could be an aspect of transforming organisational cultures (achieving greater alignment between attitudes and practices across partnerships). The partnership training programme for police referred to above was evaluated for its impacts at the level of:

- *organisational culture*: impact on participating organisation (Coxhead, 2004)

There was a related programme goal of improving relationships between agencies receiving training e.g. the police service and other public bodies working with Gypsies and Travellers, although it is not clear if this goal was achieved.

*Success factors.*

It would appear from the limited evidence base that the impact of training on whole-organisational culture and practice, rather than solely on participating individuals, will depend on several factors; including:

- *Strategic embedding* of training/awareness-raising within broader organisational objectives.
- *Reinforcement* through training of existing best professional practice.

As an example of reinforcement, in early years outreach professional practice guidance in Norfolk TESS (Riches, 2007), supportive pedagogy is drawn from DFES/Sure Start National Primary Strategies guidance documentation (2005). Key tenets for inclusion of Gypsy and Traveller children include: experiential learning, developing the culture of the curriculum, making use of culturally reflective resources, and ensuring play is influenced by home experiences.

## 6.4 Involvement of community participants

The literature provides limited descriptive evidence of formal training with participation of community participants. However, there are reports of impact from community capacity building projects where training is one of several key components.

*Impacts.*

In projects where community capacity building is an objective, impacts which are explicitly stated include (Parry *et al*, 2004; McNeil *et al*, 2005; Diacon *et al*, 2007; Mason *et al*, 2006):

- Expanded networks and frameworks for communication within communities and between communities and agencies/professionals.
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities enjoying rising expectations.
- Greater awareness of services and more positive attitudes to providers.

- Building confidence among Gypsies and Travellers through supporting access and delivering outcomes.
- Empowerment through experience.
- General increase in positive energy.
- Formation of new community groups.
- Greater cultural awareness among providers.

There is little evidence in the literature to show how some or all the impacts of community engagement indicated above would specifically arise from co-participation in training events or co-learning initiatives.

*Success factors.*

Although the literature provides sparse evidence of success factors underpinning evaluated formal training, there is some evidence of success factors underlying the kinds of co-working which can generate opportunities for learning.

For example, in one project, concerning provision of winter-summer continuity for Fairground Travellers who have experienced disrupted education during March to November, Devon Consortium TESS trained parents and teachers in joint sessions, while supporting them in preparing packs of materials for the children to take with them when travelling starts (Kiddle, 2000). This project therefore involves informal opportunities for cultural exchange and learning, rather than formal delivery of sessions by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The literature suggests that co-working enhances the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes (i.e. developing the distance learning packs and gaining parental understanding and support).

Awareness of and engaging with relationships of power is a key factor underpinning the success of joint initiatives between professional and community members (Kiddle, 2000):

- Co-participation between professionals and community members involves engaging with issues of power.
- Where teachers were dominant in early stages, co-working was less effective. Co-working became more effective as parents became more empowered numerically and in confidence.

It is also possible to infer from the literature that:

- The success factors underpinning the impact of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' participation will vary along dimensions of:
  - Cultural styles of learning: e.g. along a formal/informal continuum.
  - Position of community members in learning events: e.g. as co-providers/co-recipients with professionals.

## 6.5 Key issues – Effectiveness of training

A range of themes have been identified concerning the effectiveness of training. Each main theme is considered in turn while paying attention to the impacts of training and the success factors which appear to underpin examples of effective training

- *Purposes and priorities.* Training appears to have suffered from having a low priority within policy and practice. *Impacts.* Long-term effectiveness of training has been reduced through lack of prioritisation. *Success factors.* The effectiveness of training depends in part on clarity of purpose and priority setting.
- *Changes to professional knowledge and skills.* *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. *Success factors.* 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.
- *Changes to organisations.* There is little evidence that organisational change as opposed to individual learning results from piece-meal training. *Impact.* 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. Improved partnership work is another goal, requiring organisational culture change. *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.



- *Involvement of community participants.* The literature suggests that co-working with community members (e.g. on development of distance learning materials) enhances the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes. *Impacts* of involvement of community members in training can include more well developed networks involving Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and providers, rising expectations, greater awareness of services, empowerment of community members through experience, formation of new community groups, and greater cultural awareness among providers. *Success factors* for involving community members include engaging with the dynamics of power relations.

## 7 Overarching challenges

The literature indicates a number of overarching challenges concerning current provision and practice. An important aspect of this concerns training, which is often viewed as not being commissioned and delivered in a sufficiently strategic way, under-resourced, and implemented with a lack of due attention to sustainability. However, the literature also highlights a wider range of challenges within current practice which are summarised below.

### 7.1 Developing long term and strategic approaches

The challenges of *developing long term and strategic approaches* to broad agendas such as community capacity building and promoting social inclusion are recognised in some projects. Key factors which inhibit promotion of longer term development goals include:

- Development resources are deflected into mediating between clients and services, and dealing with urgent individual needs (McNeil *et al*, 2005).
- Effectiveness of community outreach is influenced by issues around insecurity of accommodation, and inter-organisational differences around data-sharing (The Connexions Traveller Education Social Services Alliance, 2005).
- There is a lack of central involvement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in key areas of policy development e.g. around accommodation (Diacon *et al*, 2007).
- Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in partnerships requires a capacity building approach and engaging with issues of power, trust and equality (Kiddle, 2000; Coxhead, 2004).
- Promoting social inclusion requires engagement with ‘settled’ (non-Gypsy) communities around their perceptions, concerns and prejudices (Diacon *et al*, 2007).

### 7.2 Information collection and sharing

Barriers around *information collection and sharing* between service partners have been identified concerning:

- Inadequate systems and processes around ethnic monitoring and collection and sharing of information about specific groups (Essex County Council, 2004; DCSF, 2008).

- Legal concerns and inter-organisational differences around data-sharing; this affects referrals and information sharing between partners and across locality boundaries (The Connexions Traveller Education Social Services Alliance, 2005).

Persistent barriers around communication with Gypsies and Travellers have also been identified in the areas of overuse of written media and lack of appropriately tailored variety (Essex County Council, 2004; Padfield, 2006).

### 7.3 Complexity of cultural awareness issues

Tensions around addressing the ambiguities of professionals' beliefs and understandings of issues affecting Gypsies and Travellers have been examined. For example, the value set on cultural traditions may occasionally conflict with precepts about progressive practice and acquiring social and cultural capital for inclusion (Morran, 2002). A first challenge is for training and practice to be informed by a reflective awareness of complexities of cultural issues, taking account of organisational and professional cultures, the dynamics of cultural histories of ethnic groups, individual and family differences, and such factors which can emerge from families' engagement with services as 'cultural dissonance' (Derrington, 2007). The further challenge is to translate complexities of cultural awareness into specific, locally sensitive and practical implementation, for example through blended learning approaches using ICT to take account of some traveller families' nomadic lifestyles and integrate home and school requirements of learning (Padfield, 2006).

### 7.4 Balance of focus

The challenge has been discussed of obtaining an *appropriate balance of focus and resources* between targeted, specialist provision e.g. through the use of TESS staff and outreach services, and mainstream provision. It is widely recognised that some targeted provision is required, and better training and practice are also required within mainstream services. Aspects of this challenge have been considered, including:

- Tensions within the role of TESS staff between promoting social inclusion and providing individual tuition (Derrington and Kendall, 2004).

- Over-reliance on TESS for home-school liaison, recognised the need for schools to develop greater ownership of issues (Derrington and Kendall, 2004). TESS roles are being re-shaped in some authorities to focus on capacity-building rather than delivery.
- Meeting the requirement for improved cultural awareness among mainstream health practitioners while also commissioning and developing the role of specialist health workers. It was said at one road show that if all doctors and health staff were “trained to respect people” there would be less need for dedicated services. (Gypsy, Roma and Traveller comment in Parry et al. 2004, page 10).

## 7.5 Multi-agency work

There is also a challenge of *developing multi-agency work* where the remits of different services can be dramatically divergent, underscoring the controversial and at times confrontational context of working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. For example, police, environment/public health, and planning department officers can be involved in activities associated with enforcement, and evicting families from accommodation, while housing officers, health workers, education staff, and early years professionals have remits to support the well-being of families towards ECM outcomes. There are specific problems harmonizing the outreach work of health visitors and TESS professionals with enforcement activities (Warrington and Peck, 2005).

It has been argued that local public bodies should establish an inter-agency forum at a regional or sub-regional level, bringing together officers who work with Gypsies and Travellers from different organisations and departments to act as a support network, share best practice and coordinate service provision (Diacon *et al*, 2007). For such a forum to work effectively, approaches would have to be developed to support officers in overcoming the challenges and contradictions that they face within the policy environment. For example, some local authorities have appointed a specialist Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Officer – a lead officer - in every authority well trained for developing positive community relationships and also playing a key role in facilitating multi-agency work.

## 7.6 Making best use of family environments

A further challenge is that of making best use of *home environments* for providing services as well as harmonizing this work with work in service environments. This challenge is obviously well-recognised in education and early years work.

It is argued that outreach approaches have to overcome barriers around:

- geography: area knowledge of families; isolation
- mobility and travel patterns; transport
- professional views and attitudes: lack of familiarity; shortage of resources; views on parental roles
- Some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families' preferences for on-site provision; communication and literacy issues

## 7.7 Promoting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' engagement

The challenge of *promoting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' engagement* within the development of services has been discussed previously. Many services have not made serious attempts to include Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in service development processes and decisions. This lack perpetuates mutual mistrust and misunderstanding. For example, in general, fostering services were found to have engaged in very little development work with the Traveller community (Cemlyn, 2000). This engagement in development work with the Traveller community is required as there were said to be substantial fears among the community about social services, and children being removed from families, and social workers were often unfamiliar with Traveller culture and had a lack of understanding of their minority ethnic and cultural status. As a result Traveller's lifestyle could be pathologised. These mutual suspicions mean that there is an increased risk of confrontation which impacts negatively on the work with Traveller children.

## 7.8 Training and support

Finally, the challenges concerning *training* in the literature under review can be summarised as comprising a number of key concerns.

- The lack of formal evaluation of training or evidence of what works is a concern for sustainability and development of widespread good practice.
- Training is underdeveloped, unsystematic and insufficiently resourced with information and support materials (Derrington, 2005; Morran, 2001).
- Developing effective approaches to learning requires consideration of the appropriate balance and interaction between formal training and structuring informal opportunities (Kiddle, 2000).
- Not all trainers across services feel equally well-equipped to train professionals in this area of work (Coxhead, 2004).
- Limited evidence of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller involvement in training/provision of learning opportunity (Parry *et al*, 2004; McNeill *et al*, 2005) shows the promise of this approach, but more evidence is needed of how to implement Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' involvement effectively.

## 7.9 Key issues

The literature indicates a number of challenges concerning current practice in service provision and delivery. One aspect of current provision is training and there are several other significant aspects which are also highlighted below.

- *Developing long term and strategic approaches.* Key factors which inhibit longer term service development include: short term crisis management; issues around insecurity of accommodation; inter-organisational differences around data-sharing; lack of central involvement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in policy development; the need for a capacity building approach.
- *Information sharing.* Key concerns include inadequate ethnic monitoring and inter-organisational differences around data-sharing.
- *Complexities of cultural awareness.* Tensions persist around addressing the ambiguities of professionals' beliefs and understandings concerning cultural factors as an influence on good practice.
- *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.
- *Multi-agency work.* Developing multi-agency work can be challenging where the remits of different services can be dramatically divergent 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.

- *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.
- *Training.* There is a lack of evaluation of training or evidence of what works. Training is often underdeveloped, unsystematic and insufficiently resourced. The most appropriate balance and best fit between formal training and structuring informal opportunities also needs considering. Trainers may need more support; and more evidence is needed of how to implement Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' involvement in training effectively.

## 8 Overview of key messages and concluding comments

Despite the gaps and shortcomings in the evidence base which have been highlighted, and the shortage of evidence evaluating training, the literature contains a number of key messages for sustaining good practice, while implications for training, support and information can be inferred. Key themes emerge in the areas of: developing a strategic approach to best, non-discriminatory practice; developing multi-agency work; promoting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller engagement; formal training; informal learning opportunities; and support and information needs.

### 8.1 A strategic approach

A strategic approach to development of best practice involves work with providers and with families (Mason *et al*, 2006). Sustainability issues are clearly highlighted, yet much best practice so far has depended on the work of highly motivated individuals and specialist services. Some key messages include:

- *Work with providers.* In addition to developing more culturally responsive children's services; there needs to be more effective linking between those involved in children's services and those responsible for broader policies (e.g. housing, planning). A strategic approach involves generating political will, for example working with councillors and local officers to drive forward multi-agency working. The approach needs to be strongly underpinned by the drive to challenge inequalities and discriminatory practice and ensure compliance with race relations law.
- *Work with parents, children and young people.* The heterogeneity of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities needs to be recognised with consideration of targeting training in a much more user focused way, e.g. taking fuller account of differences between individuals, families and groups. Practitioners need to engage with individual experiences while also developing cultural competence.
- *Sustainability.* Sustainable services depend ultimately on facilitating access to services without fostering dependency (Mason *et al*. 2006).
- *Developing multi-agency work.* Integrated, multi-agency work is viewed as very important to provision of effective services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (Nacif, 2005; McNeil *et al*, 2005).



## 8.2 Promoting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller engagement

Meaningful consultation with Gypsies and Travellers should form the basis for all developments (Warrington and Peck, 2005).

- *Engagement and sustainability.* Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities engage with services if they see that successful and visible short-term outcomes are achieved, which facilitates trust-building at the site. Basic needs have to be addressed, concerning social justice and respect, e.g. around basic amenities and tenure at home, and financial support systems (McNeil *et al*, 2005).
- *Family members'* involvement in training and supporting their children's learning could achieve value-added benefits, introducing them to life-long learning opportunities (Padfield, 2006).
- *Consultation* towards service development is needed both informally with individuals and groups of Travellers, and more formally with Traveller organisations (Cemlyn, 2000).

## 8.3 Formal and informal learning

There is clearly a need for more systematic training:

- Quality assured training programmes are needed, with mainstream service/partnership and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller input, designed with sensitivity to key contexts around diverse professional groups and diverse Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
- Strategic embedding of training/awareness-raising within broader organisational objectives, and reinforcement through training of existing best professional practice are important to effecting lasting organisational change.
- Informal learning opportunities are also very important, and can be planned for and facilitated, for example through multi-agency work, joint visits to families, job shadowing, exchange visits and school partnerships.

## 8.4 Support

There is a need for improved information and support to trainers and professionals:

- Trainers may need more support.
- Professional networks need to be developed and supported as a means of exchanging information and providing support.

- Professionals' links with community resources can be strengthened as a source of information and support.
- Information should be more systematically and prominently provided on local authority websites, (Essex County Council, 2004).
- There is a need for improved training materials, with input from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller contributors (Coxhead, 2004).
- Lead officers in local authorities (e.g. Gypsy Liaison Officers) can, if appropriately trained themselves, play an important role in coordinating support.

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# Appendix One

## Search strategy

Search strategies for eleven databases/web resources were developed using terms from the relevant thesauri (where available) and/or free-text searching. Searches were carried out very broadly using the core ethnic groups, as outlined below for each database, together with the time (2000-2007) and geographical (UK) limits. All records were looked at to identify studies on the key aims of service use, barriers and enablers and skills development needs.

## Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)

Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) covers a wide range of social science disciplines including criminology and sociology.

- #1 Gypsies
- #2 Travellers
- #3 Roma
- #4 Show people
- #5 Show children

## British Education Index (BEI)

BEI provides bibliographic references to 350 British and selected European English-language periodicals in the field of education and training, plus developing coverage of national report and conference literature.

- #1 Gypsy
- #2 Gypsies
- #3 Traveller\$
- #4 Itinerant\$
- #5 Showpeople
- #6 Roma
- #7 Romani

## British Education Internet Resource Catalogue (BEIRC)

The British Education Internet Resource catalogue provides information about professionally evaluated and described internet sites which support educational research, policy and practice.

- #1 Gypsy
- #2 Gypsies
- #3 Traveller\$
- #4 Itinerant\$
- #5 Showpeople
- #6 Roma
- #7 Romani

### Child Data

ChildData is produced by the National Children's Bureau. It encompasses four information databases: bibliographic information on books, reports and journal articles (including some full text access); directory information on more than 3,000 UK and international organisations concerned with children; Children in the News, an index to press coverage of children's issues since early 1996; and an indexed guide to conferences and events.

- #1 Gypsy
- #2 Gypsies
- #3 Travellers
- #4 Roma
- #5 Show people
- #6 Show children

### Current Educational Research in the United Kingdom (CERUK)

CERUK is a database of current or on-going research in education and related disciplines. It covers a wide range of studies including commissioned research and PhD theses, across all phases of education from early years to adults.

- #1 Gypsies
- #2 Travellers
- #3 Traveller education services
- #4 Roma

### International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)

International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) focuses on core social science subjects and, in addition, provides selected coverage of material in subjects such as criminology and social policy

- #1 Gypsy
- #2 Gypsies
- #3 Travellers

### Intute: Social Sciences

This gateway aims to provide a trusted source of selected high quality online information in the social sciences. It includes a browsable and searchable Internet catalogue giving access to online resources selected by experts in a range of subject areas. The gateway was browsed for appropriate literature.

### Multiverse

The Multiverse website provides teacher educators and student teachers/trainees with a comprehensive range of resources focussing on the educational achievement of pupils from diverse backgrounds. It was searched for appropriate literature.

### Research in Practice

Research in Practice is a research implementation project, which seek to promote positive outcomes for children and families through the use of research evidence. The project's website was browsed for appropriate literature.

**Social Care Online**

Social Care Online is a web-based resource providing a wide range of information and research on all aspects of social care, including criminal justice, laws and rights.

- #1 Gypsy
- #2 Gypsies
- #3 Travellers
- #4 Roma
- #5 Show people

**Social Policy and Practice**

Social Policy and Practice is a bibliographic database which includes coverage of crime, law and order alongside other major aspects of social policy.

- #1 Gypsy
- #2 Gypsies
- #3 Travellers
- #4 Roma
- #5 Show people

## Appendix Two. Summary template for literature review

<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Author(s): Date:</b>	
<b>Publisher:</b>	
<b>REVIEW OF SOURCE</b>	
<b>Purpose/focus of literature</b> (e.g. as stated in abstract)	
<b>Approaches to working with Gypsies and Travellers</b>	
<b>Type of group e.g. Gypsy, Traveller, Irish Traveller, Roma, Showpeople, and any details of levels and patterns of mobility</b>	
<b>Models of support, training and programmes available to staff</b>	
<b>Effectiveness of training and support in specific contexts – if evident</b>	
<b>Areas where gaps or shortcomings of approach indicated</b>	
<b>Implications for future policies/practices on training and support</b>	
<b>Skills and knowledge areas covered, (as indicated by author)</b>	
<b>Any specific recommendations</b>	
<b>Any other key findings, conclusions etc.</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION OF SOURCE</b>	
<b>Sector/sectors</b> (e.g. education, health, etc.)	
<b>Region/areas</b> (e.g. the South East etc.)	
<b>Participants</b> (e.g. sample size, profession, gender, age, ethnicity, etc.)	
<b>Method(s)</b> (data collection methods, instruments, etc.)	
<b>When data collected</b> (also duration)	
<b>Source/document type</b> (e.g. journal article, website, etc.)	
<b>Key references</b>	
<b>REVIEW OF EVIDENCE</b>	
<b>Reviewer's comments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is the reported analysis adequate?</li> <li>• are the author's interpretation supported by the evidence?</li> <li>• Is the analysis reliable and valid/plausible?</li> <li>• are there any biases/caveats raised or to be aware of?</li> <li>• is there corroboration or triangulation of sources?</li> </ul>	
<b>Relevance to review</b> (high, medium, low)	
<b>Date of review:</b>	<b>Reviewed by:</b>



