



**Cavan County
Local Development**

*A trading name for
Breffni Integrated CLG*

**An Inclusive Cavan:
Needs Assessment Young Travellers
(10 to 24 Years) in Cavan**



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1. Foreword



The Traveller Youth Development Project Steering Committee is delighted with the launch of **“An Inclusive Cavan: Needs Assessment of Young Travellers (10 to 24 Years) in County Cavan”**.

In 2018, Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board completed a NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training) Analysis in preparation of a NEETs Brief for the region. Ruth Daly, from Sort It Consultancy, in conjunction with Youth Services, carried out county wide Stakeholder Sessions and developed the Analysis for the NEETs brief which clearly identified the gaps in service provision for this cohort of young people and also listed the barriers that young people identified as preventing them from engaging in further education, employment or training.

In late 2018, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs approved the NEETs Brief and Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board invited local organisations to make applications for the delivery and roll out of a Youth Employability Initiative (YEI).

In May 2019, following a successful application Breffni Integrated CLG, in conjunction with Cavan Traveller Movement were awarded a contract to roll out a Cavan Traveller Youth Engagement Programme under the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).

This needs assessment which forms part of the Cavan Traveller Youth Engagement Programme was commissioned by Breffni Integrated CLG, in collaboration with Cavan Traveller Movement (CTM), with the support of Cavan County Children and Young People’s Services Committee (CYPSC), and funded through the Youth Employment Initiative and CYPSC seed funding. The needs assessment was conducted by Niall Crowley, Values Lab, and guided by a steering committee of relevant agencies and stakeholders. The members of the steering committee were Ste Corrigan, CYPSC Coordinator, Maureen McIntyre, Youth Officer, Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB), Lorraine McTeigue, SICAP Development Officer, Breffni Integrated CLG, Chrissie O’Sullivan, Coordinator CTM and Karen Shiels, Traveller Youth Development Worker, Breffni Integrated CLG.



The Needs Analysis points towards the need for change so that the lives of young travellers can be improved. Multi agency initiatives have and will continue to play an important role in responding effectively to the recommendations of this needs analysis and we look forward to making the next steps on this journey with you, collectively. It is time now to develop a clear plan, that will build upon the work commenced through this YEI and the development of this Needs Analysis to ensure together, we improve outcomes for young Cavan Travellers.

Maureen McIntyre

**Youth Officer, Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board
On behalf of the Traveller Youth Development Project Steering Committee**

2. Introduction



This needs assessment was commissioned by Breffni Integrated CLG, in collaboration with Cavan Traveller Movement (CTM), with the support of Cavan County Children and Young People’s Services Committee (CYPSC), and funded through Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board by the Dormant Accounts Fund and CYPSC Seed Fund.

The purpose of this needs assessment is to:

- Develop an evidence-based, quantitative and qualitative, change agenda to enhance outcomes for young Travellers aged 10 to 24 years.
- Celebrate progress made in meeting the needs of Travellers aged 10 to 24 years and create an enabler for further change found to be necessary.

The preparation of this report involved: a review of relevant local and national literature; an audit of the data available on young Travellers in Cavan and nationally; focus groups with young Travellers (10 to 15 and 16 to 24) and Traveller parents (three); roundtable discussions with key service providers to the Traveller community (three); and meetings with the project promoters (two).

This report first sets out the policy frame that shaped the approach to the needs assessment. The quantitative data available on the Traveller population in Cavan is then set out. The qualitative data gathered from the focus groups on the situation, experience, and needs of young Travellers is then presented. Key local institutional structures are then identified that could drive further progress for young Travellers along with the particular contribution they could make. Finally, a framework for good practice is presented and a series of recommendations are made. A list of sources and background on the author is then provided.



3. Policy Frame for the Needs Assessment

This needs assessment of young Travellers (10-24) is underpinned by the formal governmental recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group. This recognition was on foot of a report on the matter by the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality, of the Houses of the Oireachtas.

This recognition places Traveller culture and identity at the heart of any such assessment. The two core conditions for such recognition for the Traveller community are: a long and shared history and a cultural tradition of their own. These are further reinforced by characteristics such as: common language, common geographical origin and common ancestry.

As Taoiseach, I wish to now formally recognise Travellers as a distinct ethnic group within the Irish nation.

Statement by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD, On the recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group, Dáil Éireann, 1 March 2017

This needs assessment is framed by the five national outcomes sought for all children and young people under the **Better Outcomes Brighter Futures** The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020. These are that children and young people:

1. Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing.
2. Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.
3. Are safe and protected from harm.
4. Have economic security and opportunity.
5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world.

Implementation of this policy framework is committed to achieving six different 'shifts' in relation to:

- Support for parents
- Earlier intervention and prevention
- A culture that listens to and involves children and young people
- Quality services – outcomes-driven, effective, efficient and trusted
- Effective transitions
- Cross-Government and interagency collaboration and coordination

Among the specific 'shifts' sought by Government are:

- Parents will experience improved support in the important task of parenting and feel more confident, informed and able.
- Children's learning and development outcomes will have been assisted through increased access to high-quality, affordable early years education.
- A culture that respects, protects and fulfils the rights of children and young people will be evident and the diversity of children's experiences, abilities, identities and cultures will be respected.
- The views of children and young people will be sought and will influence decisions about their own lives and wellbeing, service delivery and policy priorities.
- Irish education will stand up to international benchmarks and our young people will be leaving school with critical life skills, resilient, confident and adaptable to the changing world.
- Transitions at key developmental stages and between child and adult services will have been strengthened.
- The State and its partners will work better together and plan service provision in a way that is child-centred and benefits from interagency and multidisciplinary working.

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020

The key strategic themes, high level objectives, and actions of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy are set out under the following headings:

- Cultural Identity.
- Education.
- Employment and Traveller Economy.
- Children and Youth.
- Health.
- Gender Equality.
- Anti-Discrimination and Equality.
- Accommodation.
- Travellers and Roma Communities.
- Public Services

The 2017 Economic and Social Research Institute research paper “A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland” found that:

Travellers stand out as a group that experiences extreme disadvantage in terms of employment, housing and health and that faces exceptionally strong level of prejudice.

There is a very large disparity between Travellers and non-Travellers in the level of education completed.

Among the reasons for leaving school early are likely to be the negative experiences of Traveller children in school. Traveller children (along with immigrant children and those with a disability) are significantly more likely to report being bullied at school.

Issues facing Travellers can result in generalised poor self-esteem and self-efficacy which is associated with depression and other mental health problems.

Many young Travellers indicate that there is very little point in staying on at school because there was no chance of gaining paid employment afterwards because of discrimination. They feel that the only way to get on and get jobs was to integrate, become like the settled population and deny one’s identity.

National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021

4. Population



4.1 Total

The Children and Young People’s Plan 2019-2021 of Children and Young Peoples’ Services Committee identifies that Census 2016 established 475 individuals (246 male and 229 female) identifying as members of the Traveller community. This equated to 0.63% of the population of County Cavan, slightly lower than the Traveller share of the national population at 0.7%.

The age breakdown suggests that 56.8% of Travellers in Cavan are under the age of 25 years, compared to 34.6% for the population of County Cavan as a whole. The proportion of Travellers under 15 years is 42.3% compared to 21.4% for County Cavan as a whole.

The local authority annual count carried out in November, 2018 indicated that there were 144 traveller households (490 persons) in the County. However, the Traveller primary health care project has estimated that there are as many as 900 Travellers in the county in the CHO 1 Traveller Health Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

4.2 Data

Further data on the situation and experience of Travellers in Cavan is presented in the sections below. However, the data available is limited and its accuracy subject to debate. The commitment in the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy to implement a standardised ethnic identifier across the public sector is relevant.

The Strategy commits that data disaggregated by ethnicity and gender should be collected across all Government Departments and statutory agencies to monitor and evaluate the impact of existing policies and strategies and to support evidence-based policy making.



5. Current Situation



5.1 Outcome One: Physical & Mental Wellbeing

The first outcome for Travellers, in accord with the Better Outcomes Brighter Futures strategy, would be: **Traveller children and young people are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing.**

This outcome for young Travellers needs to be concerned with their physical and mental health, the social determinants of Traveller health status, and their participation in, relationship with and experience of health service providers.

Situation

The CHO 1 Traveller Health Strategic Plan 2018-2022 includes Cavan along with four other counties. It provides national data on Traveller health, drawing in particular from the ESRI research paper and the All Ireland Traveller Health Study. More qualitative data is provided on foot of the extensive consultation for this plan. The plan has a specific section on Traveller culture, identity and health, recognising Travellers' long shared history, identity, language and value system.

Health concerns specifically identified for children in the region were: respiratory problems, behavioural disorders, metabolic disorders, cancer, asthma, diet, obesity, awareness about childhood immunisation programme (fear of needles), dental problems, and lack of access to autism counsellor. Health concerns shared by all age groups included mental health problems and associated stigma, and health related communications not working as well as they could for Travellers.

Concerns that relate to the social determinants of health identified for children in the region were: overcrowding (accommodation), homelessness, living on side of road, low educational expectations (leading to low educational attainment/early school leaving), identity issues, poverty, discrimination, communication (too many gadgets), peer pressure, and cyberbullying. Concerns related to social determinants shared by all age groups were: discrimination resulting in a mistrust of services, Lack of cooking skills, abusive relationships/family feuds, medical

card out of date, access to transport to attend appointments, arranged marriages at a very young age, poor accommodation.

Specific consultations in Cavan and Monaghan identified challenges for mental health and suicide: remove the stigma of mental health problems; provide better employment, education and leisure opportunities for Travellers; provide cultural competency training; provide information on where to go for help; openness and better understanding about LGBTQI; provide opportunities for Traveller men to come together and talk about their problems and challenges; and improve the acute hospital mental health unit.

The same consultation identified challenges for general health and wellbeing: improve primary health care for Traveller men; more opportunities for women to get involved in primary health care; cultural competency training; reduce waiting lists (counsellors); train counsellors to work with Travellers; more places to meet for a cup of tea and a chat; fear of social services removing children from the family so reluctance to engage with services; issues of substance misuse with drugs becoming an increasing problem with Travellers, particularly young men and women; and alcohol misused.

CHO 1 provides funding for primary health care initiatives targeting Travellers through Extern and Cavan Traveller Movement. The CHO 1 Traveller Health Strategic Plan identifies the Cavan Traveller Project, managed by Extern, that employs a full-time coordinator and five part-time Traveller primary health care workers. No Public Health Nurse is identified for the county.

CHO 1 engaged in consultation with Travellers and Traveller organisations on its plan and convene Traveller organisations in the region for dialogue. There is Traveller representation on the Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force. CYPSC are developing a forum for young people, led by young people. Cavan Traveller Movement convene young girls in two peer-led groups. However, young Travellers do not have any specific input into health service provision.

Perspectives

Young Travellers in older age bracket, 16 to 24 years, stated clear concerns as to the health status of young Travellers. Mental health, depression, and suicide were a particular concern. Particular stresses on Traveller men were noted. Engagement with the health services was seen as problematic where parents can think there is nothing wrong, can have a negative view and experience of doctors, and can be fearful of social services. In the younger age bracket, 10-15, health did not emerge as an issue for discussion.

Traveller parents identify particular concerns for the mental health of younger Travellers. Depression is noted and suicide. There was a concern that young people can no longer sit and talk with parents, they can be blocked in. The need for greater awareness of mental health issues was emphasised.

Issues of problematic use of drugs and alcohol abuse were identified. A lack of facilities and funding to work on these issues was noted. Links have been established with the Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force.

Service providers identify gaps in knowledge and understanding, of issues of mental health and of issues related to drug and alcohol misuse, in the Traveller community. The shame attached to addiction, the stigma associated with mental health, and lack of trust in key institutions among Travellers presents barriers to effective responses.

There is a concern that Travellers might not be accessing the services they need. The part-time Traveller primary health care workers have an important role to play. Specific training was, valuably, noted as being provided on particular services to these workers alongside training in shadowing service providers in these services.

Service providers see challenges to their own services. Services available to the general public don't always identify Traveller service-users. They could benefit from a critical eye on their premises and operations from a Traveller perspective. There were dangers seen in an approach where one size is assumed to fit all service users. Discrimination and stereotyping can be a block. A tailoring to take account of Traveller ethnic identity and to respond to Traveller culture could be important.

Specific services targeted on the Traveller community are seen as having an important contribution to make. Specific spaces for Travellers enable opportunities to talk, learn and make connections. The Men's Shed and the Traveller women's groups facilitated by Cavan Traveller Movement were noted in this regard. Specific services offer opportunities to fully address Traveller culture and identity. There is a danger noted of Travellers being

trapped in such Traveller only spaces, a form of segregation. The example of the primary healthcare workers was seen as important in acting as a bridge between the Traveller community and mainstream service providers and seeking to impact on both.

Policy Directions

Policy directions suggested by high-level objectives of the National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy are: Travellers and Roma should have improved access, opportunities, participation rates and outcomes in the health care system; health inequalities experienced by Travellers and Roma should be reduced; and health services should be delivered and developed in a way that is culturally appropriate.

The focus groups and meetings identified a number of policy and programme directions required.

Processes of mutual education involving Travellers and service providers had been organised but needed a broader application. These initiatives build trust, enable tailoring by the service provider, and deepen knowledge among the Travellers.

The resources available for Traveller primary healthcare work in Cavan is limited. There has been some recent expansion with the Cavan Traveller Movement playing a role alongside Extern. However, more Traveller primary healthcare workers are needed and Travellers are looking to be trained up. A range of funding sources needs to be mobilised.

TUSLA have developed a pathways bursary, whereby undergraduate programmes are accessed by disadvantaged groups to bring members of these groups into employment in care settings. The Traveller primary healthcare workers are another useful model, with a challenge to enable Travellers employed in these roles to get the experience and skills to secure employment in the wider health services.

There is a need for learning between organisations from what works well. This happens in a range of fora in the health sector at national level. Similar exchange within and between sectors is needed at local level. The Traveller Interagency Group is a possible site for this.

5.2 Outcome Two: Learning & Development

The second outcome for Travellers, in accord with the Better Outcomes Brighter Futures strategy, would be: **Traveller children and young people are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.**

This outcome for young Travellers needs to be concerned with their educational status, skills-based competences, and their participation in, relationship with and experience of educational establishments.

Situation

Current Traveller Numbers in Youthreach in Cavan, according to CMETB data:

- Pre-Youthreach (Cavan Youthreach): 1 Boy, 3 Girls (2 girls have enrolled but haven't started yet);
- Youthreach (Kingscourt & Cavan Youthreach): 5 Boys, 4 Girls; and
- Access Programme (Kingscourt, Cavan & Cootehill): 4 Boys, 2 Girls.

Traveller participation on CMETB programmes in both Cavan and Monaghan includes the following:

Programme Category Description	Number of learners	Number of Courses
Adult Literacy Groups	12	16
BTEI Groups	5	7
Community Education	22	23
FET Cooperation Hours	1	3
ITABE	1	1
Local Training Initiatives	11	11
Other Funding	1	1
PLC	2	2
Specific Skills Training	3	3
Youthreach	29	47

National data on education from Census 2016 is used. This established that only 1% of Travellers have progressed to third level education and 55% had left school by the age of 15.

In the Traveller Community National Survey 2017, 4 out of 10 Travellers said they or their children had been bullied in school because of their Traveller identity. 57% of Travellers felt that the community is well supported by the school system; 54% felt that Travellers are more supported than 5 years ago. 23% felt that Traveller culture was visible in the curriculum.

Innovative education initiatives in Cavan that have effectively involved Travellers include: the PLC Access Programme in Cavan Institute which has six Travellers on it; and the pre-Youthreach programme that has been piloted for the under 16s and includes Travellers. Breffni Integrated CLG. had a homework club on the Traveller halting site, but this is now closed as it no longer qualified for funding.

The Youthreach student council has Traveller members and one class representative is a Traveller. It is not clear that the school councils have Traveller members. This suggests a limited voice for young Travellers in this area.

Perspectives

Both age cohorts of young Travellers reported widespread negative experiences of school. This experience was one where: you were looked down on; there is no respect for Travellers; you are made feel uncomfortable; the teachers don't care; there might be some 'ok teachers'; why do teachers have a problem with us?; you might be trying to work something out in class but the teacher doesn't help; we just look at books and do nothing; we are not allowed hang around together; and there is racism in school, we tell our mothers and they get a meeting with the teacher but nothing happens. A more positive environment is noted in Youthreach.

Some young Travellers reported attending after-school provision. Similar issues can arise there as some noted that: the girls there laugh at us. Some would like to attend but most say they don't do so. It was suggested that settled children were encouraged to attend but not Traveller children. A Traveller homework club was suggested as a possible approach.

Mainstream youth services are not positively viewed. There is no sense of being welcomed as Travellers or any effort to include Travellers witnessed. There is also peer pressure not to attend such services. There is a preference expressed for Traveller only spaces for young people. The groups facilitated by Cavan Traveller Movement are viewed positively.

There is a sense of empowerment: we decide what to do. However, there is no such space for boys.

Early school leaving is identified. Bullying is seen as a significant issue in this. Peer pressure is noted as another significant issue: you can be laughed at if you stay on and looked down on. At the same time, there is an acknowledgement of the importance of education: if you stay on you have a better chance.

Travellers parents identify a concern with many children not going to school. They pointed to mixed experiences for their children with some loving the school experience and others unhappy with their experience. Racism in schools and lack of opportunities for young Travellers after school were noted as issues. There are issues of young children saying really negative things about Travellers. The lack of education on Traveller culture was noted.

Traveller parents pointed to good practice by schools in Bailieboro where the school engages with Traveller parents to get good attendance. Other schools need to follow this example. They noted an issue of parents not encouraging their children to stay on and the need for them to see a value in education. They identified that the Education Welfare Board has a contribution to make.

Service providers identified that, while there was a range of attitudes among Travellers, there was a lack of value placed on education by many Travellers, often due to bad past experiences. Education does not meet Traveller goals. On the other hand, some parents are seen to be playing a key role in school attendance.

While positive change in recent years was recognised, much wider access to education is still seen as being needed. There is a high risk of early school leaving and school attendance is poor. This is seen as differing between primary schools. The transition from primary to post-primary is identified as a moment of risk. While the transfer is happens, there is a fall-off in Traveller participation shortly after.

Issues, beyond attitudes to education, that were identified include: lack of transport to school; financial difficulties; Travellers marrying young; Travellers fighting in school; boys in particular don't want to be in school; having to wear a uniform; peer pressure; and limited pathways from education into paid work. The importance of community development work in the community was emphasised.

The importance of early years education was noted. There is no knowledge as to whether Travellers are accessing this. Anecdotally, they are not attending. Issues of registration were pointed as each parent must

register online, whereas previously parents could be and were supported to register. Early years education is key for transition into school life. Travellers are not being assessed for learning difficulties, often due to the stigma attached. However, some of these issues would be identified in early years education, addressing the barriers to ongoing education of undiagnosed behavioural difficulties.

When it comes to responding to Traveller culture and identity, early years education has a broad Equality Diversity and Inclusion focus and an accompanying programme. Schools have an ethnic identifier. However, it was suggested there was a fear in the schools of making a differentiation between pupils. Conversations were not happening for fear of saying something wrong. There was also the issue of too much going on in schools to make such differentiation. It was suggested that educators need to be educated.

There was a suggestion that schools could learn from the Youthreach approach. This includes for greater flexibility and the possibility for Travellers to respond to cultural imperatives. Smaller learning groups, the absence of a uniform, and the mix of academic and practical subjects were noted. There are different views as to the importance or otherwise of the allowance as an attraction for older children.

Additional supports in place, including a particular focus on those 'Not in Education, Employment or Training', are seen as valuable. After-school provision, the home-school liaison teacher, the Cavan School Completion Programme, the Education Welfare Service, and CMETB have played important roles. There are issues: the Breffni Integrated homework club on the Traveller halting site no longer qualifies for funding; many Travellers are not engaging with the home-school liaison teacher; the DEIS schools are the key focus for the schools' completion programme; and the nature of Traveller engagement with the Education Welfare Service is limited.

Policy Directions

Policy directions suggested by high-level objectives of the National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy are: access, participation and outcomes for Travellers and Roma in education should be improved to achieve outcomes that are equal to those for the majority population; and a positive culture of respect and protection for the cultural identity of Travellers and Roma should be in the education system.

There is a particular focus on early years in the Strategy, with a commitment that all relevant Departments and agencies will promote the Early Childcare and Education pre-school scheme, as well as the Access and Inclusion Model for Children with a Disability, within the Traveller and

Roma communities in order to facilitate access for every child to free pre-school from the age of three until they start school.

The focus groups and meetings noted the potential in the Yellow Flag programme for schools. The importance of engagement with young Travellers out of school was emphasised. A value in champions from within the Traveller community was noted, with reference to the NTRIS pilot programme of employing Traveller peer support workers to work with the schools and the Traveller community.



5.3 Outcome Three: Safe & Protected from Harm

The third outcome for Travellers, in accord with the Better Outcomes Brighter Futures strategy, would be: **Traveller children and young people are safe and protected from harm.**

This outcome for young Travellers needs to be concerned with their experience of stereotyping, harassment and discrimination, issues of accommodation, and the safety of children in contexts of neglect.

Situation

The CHO 1 Traveller Health Strategic Plan 2018-2022 identifies that “a number of Travellers consulted know of people or were themselves unwilling to identify themselves as Travellers due to the discrimination they have experienced in their lives. This can potentially create issues in relation to family and mental health”. There is no data available on experiences of discrimination at local level.

There are no figures for Traveller homelessness. The 2018 Cavan County Council annual count of Traveller families identified that, of the 144 Traveller households, 75.6% have accommodation provided by the local authority:

- 69 families in standard local authority housing
- 21 families in Traveller group housing
- 19 families on RAS and leasing
- 4 families on HAP
- 19 families in private rented accommodation
- 11 families sharing with relatives
- 1 family other.

There are 22 units of Traveller specific accommodation in County Cavan, 17 units in Cavan Town, 4 units in Pottleboy, and one rural dwelling.

44 Traveller households are identified as in need of social housing support in the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024. All have identified a preference for standard social housing. 29 of these households are in Cavan Town. Projected need is estimated at a further 30 Traveller households, during the programme.

The Cavan Children and Young People’s Services Committee Children and Young People’s Plan 2019- 2021 identifies that “over half (51%) of all children in care (157) in 2017 were from minority groups – including Irish Travellers and non-Irish nationals. The two main reasons for admission of children to care is in relation to neglect (46.5%) and welfare concerns

(38.9%). There is a higher proportion (82%) of young children from the Traveller community being taken into care than the Irish or non-Irish nationals (65% and 63% respectively). None of the Traveller community children in care were admitted into care in their teens”.

Perspectives

Young Travellers identified extensive and shared experiences of discrimination: we are being judged; settled people treat us badly; they think we are all the same; most settled people don't show respect, some do; it can be hard in shops, you get watched; people call you names on the estate, people coming in from other areas; school is not very nice; school books are negative to Travellers; when we mix in we get dirty looks; we don't think about getting a job as we won't get it; and we don't have equality.

The impact of these experiences was evident in hurt and in blunted ambition: you don't feel right; we get angry at the hatred; we want to do things other people do; I would be happy to go to school if I get the respect; we won't be changed, take the settled way; we need better treatment; you are beat before you start, what can you do?; and you don't want to set yourself up to fail, you get embarrassed.

Traveller parents shared this concern with widespread discrimination and its impact. They were pessimistic about prospects for change. They suggested young Travellers were not mixing a lot and isolation was an issue, but they did see some improvement in this. The need to interact more was noted, though it was specified that this had to be an equal exchange. They valued Travellers' own spaces in this context, such as the Cavan Traveller Movement and the Primary Healthcare project.

Traveller parents pointed to accommodation issues where national funding for Traveller accommodation was not being spent. They were also concerned with the issues of discrimination in the private rented sector and bullying at school. More generally, service providers were seen as stereotyping Travellers and they needed to give Travellers a fair opportunity. They were frustrated at service providers saying there was no discrimination and that no training on this was needed.

Service providers identified a concern with discrimination by employers and the barriers this presented for young Travellers.

Policy Directions

Policy directions suggested by high-level objectives of the National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy are: public services should be provided in a way that is non-discriminatory and respectful of Traveller and Roma culture and identity; relevant public services staff should be trained in anti-racism and cultural awareness and understand their obligations under the section 42 (positive duty) in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014; and the provision of accessible safe spaces for young Travellers and Roma, such as access to school and community facilities.

The focus groups and meetings identified the need to end discrimination and to make use of the equality legislation. They pointed to the need to educate people about Travellers and for settled people to change their opinions. There is a need for places for Travellers where they do not get judged for who they are.



5.4 Outcome Four: Economic Security & Opportunity

The fourth outcome for Travellers, in accord with the Better Outcomes Brighter Futures strategy, would be: **Traveller children and young people have economic security and opportunity.**

This outcome for young Travellers needs to be concerned with their employment status and their participation in and experience of the world of work.

Situation

In the absence of local data on the employment situation of Travellers, the Cavan County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 notes that the “socio economic status of the Traveller population is of relevance when determining accommodation needs e.g. the census shows that 10,654 travellers in Ireland were included in the labour force, however 80.2% were unemployed compared with 12.7% of the general population. The situation in Cavan is likely to mirror this national picture. An ethnic identifier is not used by service providers in this field. This is explained as being due to fears of being seen to discriminate.

Breffni Integrated CLG have targeted young Travellers in pre-employment skills development. Employability work with a number of Travellers, both referrals from CAMHS and self-referrals, in providing targeted assistance to find employment. Traveller part-time primary healthcare workers are employed through Extern with HSE funding. DEASP case-officers provide support to eligible Travellers in finding employment.

Perspectives

Aspirations in relation to employment articulated by young Traveller were limited. There were few options identified by them other than to: go with the flow. There were few choices seen: we won't get a job or we will only get the low jobs. The prospect of life on social welfare was seen as largely inevitable in a context where: not much opportunity was apparent and not much was going on. There was clarity that a group of settled young people would have very different aspirations.

Peer pressure was identified as another issue in limited aspirations: they don't like to see you working or being successful, they make a laugh of you. At the same time, there were ambitions evident with both teacher and artist identified as dreams. The need to finish school to realise such ambitions was stated: you need to have your education. There was a

confidence too in a bleak context, stating: we are smart, we find ways to make a living.

Aspirations identified tended to be quite gendered. Women's ambitions were limited to getting engaged and doing work in the home, with some aspirations for work as hairdressers or beauticians.

Traveller parents were concerned that there was not much there for young Travellers: what do they do?; what choices are there?; they are better off leaving education as they are not going to get a job; and employers discriminate.

They felt that there was change going on in the Traveller community. Young Travellers are looking for employment and: getting a couple of hours, bits of work; they are not interested in the dole. The Traveller economy changing: ten to fifteen years ago Travellers did the hawking; they are still doing the scrap.

Service providers were concerned with three dimensions to the issue of low levels of employment for young Travellers: the mindset of young Travellers, employer discrimination, and low levels of education, skills, and literacy.

Incidents of Travellers not turning up for appointments or for work, peer pressure blocking people staying on programmes, and lack of parental support were noted. This can make referrals to employers difficult as the relationship with the employer breaks down if the person referred does not perform. Travellers were seen as stand offish in relation to key institutions, not approaching these institutions for assistance. Issues of trust are apparent. Gender issues and expectations on young girls were noted as a barrier.

At the same time, incidents were noted of young Travellers dying to get work but employers would not take them. They won't get a job. There was a need stated to engage with employer networks: Business Network Ireland in Cavan, and the Cavan Chamber. Difficulties in securing TUS sponsors for Travellers were noted. Young Travellers were engaging in the Traveller economy, young men were spoken of as 'out working with their dads'. There is a need to have a focus on self-employment.

There was no mechanism or forum evident for organisations working in this field to hear the voice of young Travellers. The reasons for their engagement with the services, how they engage, and where they engage has not been explored.

Policy Directions

Policy directions suggested by high-level objectives of the National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy are: tailored support and targeted initiatives for unemployed Travellers and Roma; increased employment, training and apprenticeships opportunities for Travellers and Roma; targeted positive public service recruitment to train and employ Traveller and Roma staff in public services; and entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for Traveller and Roma should be supported.

The focus groups and meetings identified a value in developing specific supports and peer support services in the field of employment. Pre-employment services were seen as important as well as opportunities for self-employment. The need for an employer cohort to champion Travellers was emphasised with the potential for the DEASP to do a project on this with collaboration from Employability and Breffni Integrated CLG. Spaces for service providers in this field to learn from each other as to initiatives that work were viewed as being needed.

5.5 Outcome Five: Connected, Respected & Contributing

The fifth outcome for Travellers, in accord with the Better Outcomes Brighter Futures strategy, would be: **Traveller children and young people are connected, respected and contributing to their world.**

This outcome for young Travellers needs to be concerned with: their having a say in decisions that impact on them; their engagement with their own culture and identity; the manner in which their culture and identity are addressed by public services; and the spaces available to them to connect as Travellers and to engage with their settled peers. It further needs a perspective on the diversity of young Travellers in terms of their gender, gender identity, disability, and sexual orientation in particular.

Situation

There is limited data available in relation to this outcome. The Cavan Children and Young People's Services Committee, Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021 points out an absence of specific issue-based support groups such as LGBTBI support, disability support and Traveller youth support in Cavan.

Perspectives

Young Travellers had only a limited sense of having a say. They noted that: teachers don't listen to you, they don't let us talk if something has happened. However, in the Travellers' own space of the Cavan Traveller Movement young girls group they felt they had a say.

They expressed pride in being a Traveller. They did not find it easy to articulate what being a Traveller meant: you are brought up a Traveller; it is about culture, heritage, way of life, there is the language, we stand by ourselves, and we have our world, not going to change. They pointed to the value of a Traveller Pride Day. There was a sense of change in that: Travellers have changed, there are different ambitions now, it is more modern; and, with more concern: the culture is dying, fading away; some Travellers are just like settled people. A clear divide was noted, between those saying they are Travellers and those who do not.

There was concern that there is no talk about Travellers, and their culture and identity, in school: there is a need for people to be educated about our ways; and we would like to learn more Traveller stuff at school, about our culture, our past.

There is no youth group for boys. They articulated a need for somewhere

to meet and to mix. Travellers are not mixing with young settled people. Sometimes they are not allowed to mix in settled peoples' groups, though the boys are involved in sports where there is mixing.

Traveller parents felt that young Travellers did not have much of a say. They were listened to by their parents.

They identified that people don't understand different ethnicity, even Travellers don't have much understanding. There is a need to talk the Traveller language, they felt, or it will be lost. Overall there was a concern about identity being lost.

Reference was made to the way service providers in training services used to bring in older Travellers to teach the Traveller language. Travellers were seen as getting more and more settled, without the opportunity to move. There was a sense articulated of Traveller identity being stripped away.

The need for more groups for young Travellers was emphasised alongside the need for funding for these groups.

Service providers identified spaces where Travellers have a voice: there is a Traveller on the regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force; Travellers are represented on the Traveller Interagency Group; Traveller groups across the five counties of CHO1 get an opportunity to meet and voice concerns; the Youthreach student council has Traveller representatives. However, there was a concern that young Travellers, specifically, did not have a voice. The CYPSC is developing a forum for young people, that is young people led, and there is an intent that young Travellers would be involved.

There is a need to break down barriers for young Travellers to participate effectively in a mixed forum. Travellers need their own space, as well as these mixed spaces, to gear up to participate in the mixed space. This was described as a process of bridging and bonding. Traveller girls and young women have the two Cavan Traveller Movement groups in this regard.

Particular challenges were identified for young LGBT Travellers. They need a safe space. There can be a lack of acceptance within their own community, though the Traveller community did mark Gay Pride. There are challenges for young Traveller women to identify and fulfil their aspirations, free from gender stereotyping.

Policy Directions

Policy directions suggested by high-level objectives of the National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy are: Traveller and Roma children being consulted appropriately in the development of policy, legislation, research and services; Traveller culture, identity and heritage being supported and valued within Irish society; Travellers and Roma should be supported to develop, preserve and promote their cultural heritage; youth programmes and services being developed in a culturally inclusive and appropriate manner; and the multiple disadvantages face by Traveller and Roma women and LGBTI Travellers and Roma need to be addressed.

The focus groups and meetings identified the importance of celebrating Traveller Pride and the value in a museum to allow Travellers to look back and explore what it is to be a Traveller and for settled people to learn about Travellers.



6. Points of Collaboration



There is broad recognition in the various agency strategies of the value of interagency initiatives to respond to what are complex needs. There is a significant institutional infrastructure in place in Cavan to advance Traveller issues. This is seen as a source of potential in improving the situation and experience of young Travellers, and as a space for collaborative engagement with these issues that is both multi-agency and multi-sectoral. There was agreement that improvements could be made to this institutional infrastructure if it is to realise this potential.

This institutional infrastructure includes the:

1. **Traveller Interagency Group.** This is currently evolving with new members and work to develop a strategy for its interventions. This was identified as a key driver for implementing the policy directions suggested by the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy and for mutual learning between agencies and between sectors in relation to good practice in working with Travellers. It includes a Traveller education sub-group.
2. **Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.** The membership of the Cavan LTACC comprises of 12 members with 4 Local Authority Members, 4 Traveller Representatives and 4 Local Authority Officials. It has a particular focus on the Traveller Accommodation Programme and its implementation.
3. **Cavan Children and Young People's Services Committee.** This has six sub-groups formed around the five national outcomes and Goal 1 of parenting support. This is responsible for the Children and Young People's Plan. CYPSC is developing a forum for young people, led by young people.
4. **Traveller Primary Healthcare Project Committee.** This is to advance the work of implementing this project.
5. **Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force.** This is to implement the national drugs strategy in a manner relevant to the region.

6. Public Participation Network. This provides a space for civil society networking and Traveller organisations have briefed civil society organisations on Traveller issues as part of this.

Cavan Traveller Movement play a key role in organising Traveller representation across this institutional infrastructure. The Men's Shed, the women's groups, and the Traveller youth groups they organise are important in this regard. However, it can be a challenge to get people to all the meetings involved.

7. Good Practice Framework

In July 2019, Cavan Traveller Movement organised a workshop for Travellers and settled people from a variety of organisations, to discuss their interest in achieving an inclusive Cavan, as part of its project under the EU's PEACE IV Programme.

Participants identified shared values that motivated their concern for and interest in an inclusive Cavan. These were the values of respect, freedom, equality and social justice. This was developed as a Values Statement which set out and defined these values and identified the change required by each value. This Values Statement offers a solid foundation for a good practice framework for organisations seeking to respond effectively to the situation and experience of young Travellers.

Values Statement

Respect is about valuing other people and respecting yourself. It involves equal treatment and an acceptance of difference.

We will strive for everyone to have awareness, knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of different identities and different cultures.

Freedom is about people having choices, being able to live the lives they want, and pursuing the paths they choose without being judged.

We will strive for people to have a voice, be heard, and be at the right tables to have a say in making decisions that impact on their lives.

Equality is about allowing for difference and tailoring services and opportunities to different needs. It involves giving people a leg-up and enabling them to achieve their goals.

We will strive for everyone to have opportunities and to have the supports they need to take full advantage of these opportunities.

Social Justice is about people having access to and participating in all aspects of life including education, jobs and good health.

We will strive for all organisations to equality proof their policies so that their services are designed and delivered inclusively from the start.

The **value of respect**, as defined with a focus on equal treatment and acceptance of difference, motivates organisations to:

- ➔ Develop and implement an equality policy that sets a standard of equal treatment for employees and service users, including young Travellers, and includes an effective and accessible complaints system for addressing any issues of discrimination or harassment that arise.
- ➔ Provide training for staff to enable their capacity to fully implement the equality policy based on an understanding of cultural difference and its implications, and of the issues of discrimination and harassment.

The **value of freedom**, as defined with a focus on choices and people living the lives they want, motivates organisations to:

- ➔ Have systems in place to hear the voice of young Travellers and to enable them to have their needs and aspirations put forward effectively and considered in decision-making processes.
- ➔ Enable young Travellers to have and to make informed choices, free from stereotyping and from constrained ambitions.

The **value of equality**, as defined with its focus on allowing for difference, tailoring for difference and giving people a leg up, motivates organisations to:

- ➔ Develop and implement organisational systems to identify and respond to barriers and specific needs, related to their culture and identity, that arise for young Travellers in accessing services.
- ➔ Assess the equality and human rights issues faced by young Travellers as part of implementing the public sector equality and human rights duty and ensure action is taken to address these when developing or reviewing plans, programmes, and operational procedures.

The **value of social justice**, as defined with its focus on access to and participation in education, jobs and good health, motivates organisations to:

- ➔ Conduct an impact assessment on draft education, employment, health general plans and programmes to assess how young Travellers would benefit and take steps to ensure the final version of these plans and programmes enhance their access to education, employment and health, including through positive action targeted initiatives if required.
- ➔ Gather data on the take-up by young Travellers of and outcomes from education, employment and health services through an ethnic identifier.

8. Recommendations



The situation and experience of young Travellers established above, and the needs that arise from this, point to the need for change both within public bodies and within the Traveller community.

1. Public services should formally adopt the good practice framework set out above for their work with young Travellers. They should engage in peer support to enable and ensure its full and effective implementation. This should be enabled, supported, and monitored through the Traveller Interagency Group.
2. Public services, specifically in the fields of health, education and accommodation, should employ an ethnic identifier to track and analyse Traveller access, participation and outcomes from services in these fields. The model used by Pobal in the local development programme and the guidance developed for this should be used. This should be enabled, supported, and monitored through the Traveller Interagency Group.
3. A strong Traveller community infrastructure, underpinned by community development principles and including a targeting of young Travellers, should be supported and adequately resourced. This should be developed through expanding the community infrastructure being developed and implemented by Cavan Traveller Movement and increasing the human and financial resources available to this organisation. Cavan Traveller Movement should prepare a community development plan that takes account of and responds to this needs assessment, identifying the steps to be taken and the resources required. This should be considered, agreed, and supported through the Traveller Interagency Group and Cavan Children and Young People's Services Committee.
4. Specific steps should be taken by Cavan Traveller Movement to sustain and expand the developmental spaces it facilitates for young Travellers to encompass both men and women, boys and girls, and be supported through the Traveller Interagency Group and Cavan Children and Young People's Services Committee.

Multi-agency initiative has an important role to play in responding effectively to this needs assessment of young Travellers. The Traveller Interagency Group (TIG) and the Cavan Children and Young People's Services Committee have a particular role to play in this regard.

5. The Traveller Interagency Committee should continue to expand its membership to include the full spectrum of agencies working with the Traveller community. Its forthcoming plan of action should include steps to:
 - a. establish and promote the practical implications of Traveller ethnicity, culture and identity for providing services to the Traveller community;
 - b. support and monitor the implementation of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy in Cavan;
 - c. support and monitor agreement on and implementation by public bodies of the good practice framework set out in this document;
 - d. create spaces and opportunities for sharing learning among members on effectively engaging with young Travellers, responding to their needs, and enabling outcomes for them; and
 - e. promote opportunities for mutual learning between young Travellers and service providers that enable familiarity and understanding of the services among young Travellers, and enable a capacity among service providers to better understand and respond to the needs of young Travellers.
6. The Cavan Children and Young People's Services Committee should take responsibility for leading on, adapting as necessary, and securing implementation of the recommendations of this needs assessment.

Traveller culture and identity emerge as a key factor in the wellbeing of young Travellers, in terms of a valuing of their culture and identity by others, an understanding of their culture and identity by themselves, and an acceptance of the multiple identities held by young Travellers.

7. Traveller Pride Week should provide a key moment for a planned and strategic: examination of the practical implications of Traveller culture and identity for service providers; communication to the wider public about Traveller culture and identity; and exploration of Traveller culture and identity by young Travellers.
8. A Traveller heritage space should be identified and resourced by Cavan County Council, as part of another similar institution, to record, make available, and celebrate Traveller culture and identity and their history in the county.
9. Multiple identity should be a concern in all Traveller specific service provision, in order to establish and respond to the particular needs and barriers to access and progress, such that all Travellers are included. The TIG could offer a space for assessing and responding to the challenges in this.
10. Organisations targeting other population groups need to be encouraged to take a multiple identity perspective and to address

the needs and barriers specific to the Traveller members of their target groups. The project of promoting an Inclusive Cavan developed by Cavan Traveller Movement offers potential for this in making links between these different organisations behind shared goals. This initiative should be revitalised and resourced.

Education is a foundation stone for wellbeing and progress for young Travellers. It was a core area for attention in the focus groups and meetings for this needs assessment.

11. The CYPSC, early years education service providers, and the Cavan Traveller Movement should conduct a survey to establish the levels of Traveller participation in early years education and barriers to access. This should be followed up with an action plan devised and implemented to enhance levels of access and address barriers to access.
12. Schools in Cavan should all implement the Yellow Flag Programme, which is run by the Irish Traveller Movement to promote greater understanding and valuing of cultural diversity within school communities. Cavan County Council should provide the financial contribution required by the Yellow Flag Programme. If the Yellow Flag Programme is not able to respond to these requests from Cavan schools, the steps involved in the Yellow Flag Programme should be implemented by the schools with the support and involvement of Cavan Traveller Movement, contracted external expertise, and financial resources mobilised locally.
13. Schools in Cavan should create a specific forum in each school for an ongoing and responsive dialogue with Traveller students about their shared experience, needs and aspirations. They should take steps to engage with Traveller parents as a group, including having Traveller representation on school boards.
14. A project should be initiated and resourced, through Cavan Traveller Movement, to employ part-time Traveller peer support workers to work with young Travellers and the schools they attend, to: enhance the experience, attendance levels, and outcomes for young Travellers; and to strengthen school capacity to respond effectively to Traveller culture and identity and the specific needs of young Travellers. This could draw from the pilot projects implemented by the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy.

Employment is linked to education. If Travellers cannot access the labour market, a key incentive to stay in education is lost. If Traveller don't get education, access to the labour market is made more difficult. Employment emerged in the needs assessment as an area where young Travellers face many barriers.

15. The DEASP should lead a collaborative project with Breffni Integrated CLG, and Employability to establish, inform, and involve a cohort of employers to give leadership on employing young Travellers.
16. Breffni Integrated CLG and DEASP should continue to provide pre-employment courses specifically targeted to better enable young Travellers to compete for jobs that come available. This should include an element of enabling self-employment among young Travellers interested in this.
17. Breffni Integrated CLG should employ a dedicated placement officer to work with employers and young Travellers for a time-limited period, and create a body of role models for young Travellers in employment and for employers in employing Travellers.

Health is foundational to wellbeing for young Travellers. It is an area of significant challenge given the poor health status of the Traveller community, and the particular risks faced by young Travellers.

18. The HSE and the Traveller Primary Healthcare Project should give a priority focus to enhancing the response by relevant health service providers to the mental health of young Travellers. This would include:
 - a. initiatives to deepen the capacity of the Traveller primary healthcare workers and their familiarity with these services;
 - b. outreach initiatives by the Traveller primary healthcare workers to target young Travellers with information and support;
 - c. outreach and communication work with the wider Traveller community to address the stigma associated with mental health; and
 - d. building the capacity of service providers to better understand Traveller culture and identity and to develop culturally appropriate responses, including through providing cultural competence training.
19. The HSE should develop a progression plan for the Traveller Primary Healthcare Workers to move into employment within the mainstream health services. New primary healthcare workers should then be recruited and trained. An expansion in the number of Traveller primary healthcare workers should be sought and secured.

Finally, accommodation and access to a secure home is also foundational to wellbeing for young Travellers. It is an area where clear plans are in place, with the challenge to ensure implementation.

20. Cavan County Council should ensure the full and effective implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme and a complete draw-down of funds made available.
21. Cavan County Council should establish the level and nature of Traveller homelessness, with a particular focus on young Travellers and should develop appropriate responses to any particular needs identified.



9. Sources



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10. Author



NIALL CROWLEY

Niall Crowley is an independent equality and human rights expert. He is based in Ireland and works on these issues in Ireland and across Europe.



At a European level his work has included projects supported by the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the OSCE, the European Institute of Gender Equality, and Equinet, the European network of equality bodies. It includes work on equal treatment legislation; anti-discrimination policy; and equality bodies. This has ranged from projects of: evaluation of institutions, policy, and legislation; policy advice and support; institutional support, training and planning; and research and analysis.

At an Irish level his work has included projects with a wide range of public sector bodies and with civil society organisations. It includes work on implementing the public sector equality and human rights duty; values-led approaches to equality and human rights by organisations; equality and human rights review of organisational operations, and institutional development. This has encompassed projects of: strategic planning and evaluation; research; training and mentoring; and institutional auditing.

Prior to this he worked for ten years as chief executive of the Equality Authority from its establishment in 1999. The Equality Authority was the Irish equality body responsible for the implementation of employment equality and equal status legislation covering nine grounds. Before that he worked in civil society on the rights of the Traveller community with Pavee Point.

He is author of 'An Ambition for Equality' published by Irish Academic Press in 2006 and 'Empty Promises: Bringing the Equality Authority to Heel' published by A&A Farmar in 2010, alongside a wide range of policy papers, research reports and academic articles. He is co-founder of the Values Lab in Ireland.



Cavan County Local Development

A trading name for
Breffni Integrated CLG



emetb
Boird Eabhrach agus Fíriche
an Chathair agus Mhúirneálaí
Cavan and Monaghan
Education and Training Board



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs



Comhairle Contae
an Chabháin
Cavan
County Council

