



Friends, Families
and Travellers

Annual Report

2008 - 2009

Charity Number 1112326

Friends, Families & Travellers

INTRODUCTION	2
REPORT OF THE CHAIR	3 - 6
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR	7 - 8
OUR TRUSTEES	9
CORRINA ADAMS	9
WHAT WE DO	10 - 11
THE ADVICE AND INFORMATION UNIT	12 - 14
CASE STUDIES	15 - 16
POLICY	17
PLANNING	18
STAFF	19 - 21
OUR CONSULTANT EXPERTS	22
JOIN OUR ORGANISATION	23
PARTNERSHIP WORKING	24
REACHING COMMUNITIES	25 - 26
TRAVELLER ADVICE PROJECT	26 - 27
SUSSEX TRAVELLERS HEALTH PROJECT	28 - 31
YOUTH WORK	32 - 33
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT	34
WITH GRATEFUL THANKS	35 - 36

Introduction to FFT

Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) was established during the passage through Parliament of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act and has emerged as a lead organisation seeking to address the problems facing the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Starting as an informal support group working primarily with New Travellers, FFT soon began working with Gypsies and Irish Travellers and within a few years had grown into a formal organisation providing advice and information along with a wide range of other services to Gypsies and Travellers nationwide.

Very early on in its history, FFT developed a working relationship with the Public Law Project and provided crucial ground work for two landmark legal challenges which resulted in local authorities being required to make basic welfare enquiries before being able to carry out evictions.

We seek to end racism and discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers, whatever their ethnicity, culture or background, whether settled or mobile, and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.

FFT's ongoing work in this field gained recognition when the organisation was shortlisted for the Human Rights Award in 1999. Taking this work forward, FFT is one of the partners within the Traveller Law Reform Project, along with the Irish Traveller Movement and the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit.

Today FFT is the only national charity (registered charity no. 1112326) which works on behalf of all Gypsies and Travellers regardless of ethnicity, culture or background. FFT is also a non-profit making company limited by guarantee (no. 3597515).

FFT is a membership organisation run by a Management Committee, which in 2008/9 was made up of eight Trustees, four of whom were Travellers and two of whom were lawyers specialising in Traveller issues.



Report of the Chair - Liz Watkins



I am pleased to introduce our 2008/9 Annual Report which outlines the work that we have been doing at national, regional and local levels to try to redress the serious inequalities that are still part and parcel of the life of Gypsies and Travellers.

Our aim as an organisation is to seek to end racism and discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers, whatever their ethnicity, culture or background, whether settled or mobile, and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.

All our work is on behalf of Gypsies and Travellers, but many of our clients experience multiple discrimination. For example, there can be difficult physical access issues for disabled Travellers living on sites, particular issues for carers (many of whom may be older siblings of young children), a high preponderance of homophobia within sections of the travelling communities and a huge stigma attached to mental health illness, which is rarely spoken of or discussed openly. A further major issue is the extent of domestic violence and, in particular, violence against women.

It is for these (and many other) reasons that I am delighted that funding successes in 2008-09 have enabled us to expand further and that this success has continued into the first part of 2009/10 with the news that we have been awarded funding from the Communities and Local Government Department under its 'Tackling Racial Inequalities' programme. This ensures some medium term stability and gives us this opportunity to expand our highly valued and successful projects and services local to the South East into other regions of the country, particularly the South West and the East of England, where we have identified unmet needs for services.



Chris Whitwell our Director has always worked more than full time hours for FFT on a part time salary, donating additional hours on a voluntary basis - the funding successes he and colleagues

Report of the Chair - Liz Watkins

have brought to FFT mean we can at last give him the full time salary he so greatly deserves.

The following are just some examples of where FFT's "building capacity" work has really stood out for me over the past year:

- Providing training to statutory and voluntary sector organisations, including the police, on cultural and racial awareness to help them communicate with and better understand the unique circumstances of Gypsies and Travellers.
- Two Trustees with extensive expertise in Gypsy and Traveller law have helped Citizens Advice review their web-based information system "Advisornet" which all CABx across the country use to inform their services to Gypsy and Traveller clients.
- Our first domestic violence seminar which was attended by over 100 organisations from all sectors - beginning a dialogue and action on this most sensitive of issues.
- Gaining some funding to develop mental health outreach services.

Mental health, dentistry and young people's services stand out for me as areas which have always been under-provided to Gypsies and Travellers by the mainstream services. Our outreach team works to support individuals, families and communities to help them identify and access the mainstream services best suited to meet their health and social care needs.

There are a great many unmet mental health needs within travelling communities. These appear to arise from the marginalisation and social exclusion that these communities face on a daily basis. For highly mobile travelling communities a significant factor is the constant forced eviction and having to move in an unplanned way, with the ensuing traumas and inability to take control over one's life. For those Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar we have found the problems to be no less acute. Racist incidents and discrimination from neighbours and landlords may mean a housed Traveller still feeling unsettled. Problems frequently go unacknowledged and it is not uncommon for potentially serious mental disorders to be characterised as 'nerves' within these communities or to be tolerated in a way that does not happen in the settled community leading to the "normalisation" of what can be highly debilitating illnesses. I feel the funding we have received to support our mental health workers is a particularly important start in this area of work and the experience and insight they gain will be invaluable to health services nationally.



Report of the Chair - Liz Watkins

Nationally, we provide extensive telephone based advice, information and advocacy services to Gypsies and Travellers, giving support over a wide range of problems including pending evictions, site management, racism and discrimination, school exclusions, planning, housing etc.

We want to build on our existing casework and advocacy service. Specifically, we have found that helping individual Gypsies and Travellers to resolve particular problems and issues has created opportunities to empower individuals, families and communities to take greater control over their own lives and develop the ability to tackle future problems for themselves. For example, in dealing with a case where residents on a Gypsy site were experiencing problems of poor site management, our caseworker was able both to resolve the immediate issue and to facilitate the setting up of a new residents group so that they were better equipped to address such problems in the future. At present our capacity to undertake this additional work is limited but we have identified an enormous potential for capacity building local communities linked to specific casework activities.

Our campaigning work continues to be of vital importance in making the "powers that be" and organisations of all sectors aware of the real impact of policies on the ground.

We campaign vigorously at national level for legal and social policy reforms and a key strength of our organisation is that the evidence from our casework and advocacy is used to inform our policy and campaigning work.

In addition particular policy work has continued in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment process and we are grateful to Steve Staines, one of our original founders, who continues to work tirelessly to ensure that the blatant under-assessment of need in some local authority areas does not go unchallenged. You can read Steve's comments elsewhere in this Annual Report.

The health outcomes of Gypsies and Travellers still shock me to the core. One study carried out by Sheffield University in 2004 found Gypsies and Travellers having a life expectancy of 10 - 12 years less than people in the settled community and a Gypsy mother nearly 20 times more likely to experience the death of a child than a mother in the settled community. More recent work in the Leeds area suggests that the age expectancy gap might be as high as 25 years.



In a western, so called, "developed" and "modern" country in the 21st Century surely this can't be right? And the outcomes are probably even worse in other areas of Europe.

Report of the Chair - Liz Watkins

FFT has always "punched above its weight" and the difference our organisation makes compared to its size always blows me away. Our Director Chris Whitwell reported the following to the Trustee Board which provides some evidence perhaps that change is happening, albeit slowly:

"I do feel that the work that FFT is doing at national level is pushing the issue of Gypsies and Travellers, at least onto the agenda if not further up it. When I go to meetings these days I am no longer the only person talking about the exclusion of, and discrimination against, Gypsies and Travellers, and this was not the case a couple of years back."

This is encouraging but as always there is much more that needs to be done and I still maintain that our most excellent models of service delivery which have largely been restricted to the Sussex should be rolled out nationally. We have some extremely successful project models, developed by and with Gypsies and Travellers for Gypsies and Travellers, and feel strongly that the statutory agencies should replicate these nationally, particularly as health and education outcomes for the travelling communities are still so far behind those of the settled communities.

We never forget that we cannot bring about effective and long lasting change alone and we will continue to work in cooperation and partnership with all the other Gypsy and Traveller organisations, as well as the vast and ever expanding network of other organisations FFT has contacts with in all sectors, to bring about the changes that are needed.

As ever this annual report should give you a real flavour of what our most valued staff and volunteers have undertaken in 2008/9 and what we hope to do in the future. We will continue to build capacity in other organisations and in the Gypsy and Traveller communities, as well as seeking funding to develop a broader geographical cover.

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported FFT in 2008-9, especially our staff and volunteers and everyone who has used our services, worked with or for us, communicated with and listened to FFT in any positive way - keep it up folks!

Liz Watkins
Chair



Report of the Director - Chris Whitwell



2008/9 has been another year of growth and development for FFT with a range of new projects and services being developed and implemented. As an organisation working at national, regional and local levels we have sought to balance the campaigning and policy work that we do with the casework and local outreach services so that our work at the strategic level is always informed by what is happening on the ground.

Our work is based on three main pillars - casework, capacity building and campaigning - and we afford equal importance to each. Through our casework we can make a real and lasting difference to the lives of the individuals and families that we help but we recognise that, as a relatively small organisation, we can only meet a small part of the need and so we also work to build the capacity of mainstream organisations in the voluntary and statutory sectors to provide appropriate and culturally sensitive services to Gypsies and Travellers.

The more casework and capacity building we do however, the more we realise how much needs to change in order to redress the disgraceful and shameful inequalities and discrimination faced by Gypsies and Travellers as part of their everyday experience. Gypsies and Irish Travellers still experience the worst health outcomes of any minority ethnic group; Gypsies and Irish Travellers are the only minority ethnic group where educational outcomes have actually worsened over the last few years, shockingly worse than for any other minority ethnic group; and it almost beggars belief that in a civilised society we can still accept a situation where there are around 25,000 people who have nowhere where they can place their homes 'legally' but instead are constantly harried and evicted from one 'unauthorised' location to another.

We will continue to campaign in our own right and with partner organisations to try to bring



Report of the Director - Chris Whitwell

about a more equal and just society where Gypsies and Travellers are respected and valued as an integral part of our community and not treated as outcasts to be moved on and forgotten as quickly as possible.

Although progress is slow I believe that we are beginning to make a difference. Networks and fora concerned with equality, social justice and human rights are at last putting Gypsy and Traveller issues onto their agendas and recognising the need to address the shocking inequalities that exist.

As somebody committed to trying to help bring about a fairer and more just society I feel strongly that we must prioritise the needs of those in society who experience the greatest extremes of inequality, the people who are chronically and systematically excluded from meeting those basic needs that most of us take for granted - the need for a home, the need for proper healthcare, the need to ensure that our children receive appropriate education and the need to be valued and respected by one's fellow human beings.

I hope that you enjoy reading, in the following pages, about the various projects and services that Friends, Families and Travellers is delivering. We could not maintain this level of growth and activity without the support of our members and our various funders, all of whom are acknowledged elsewhere in this report.

Above all I would like to say what an enormous privilege it is for me to work with such a dedicated and talented team of staff and Trustees who, despite the mountain still to be climbed, are bringing about real and positive changes to the lives of the people within the travelling communities.



Chris Whitwell
Director FFT

Our Trustees

Our Trustees during 2008/9 were -

Liz Watkins (Chair)
Neil Ansell (Vice Chair)
Justine Compton (Honorary Treasurer)
Roberta (Bobby) Kellie (who sadly died in 2008)
Mark Willers
Judy Pointing
Tony Thompson
Rob Torkington
Greg Yates (co-opted December 2008)

Our Director, Chris Whitwell, is also Company Secretary.

Corrina Adams



In February we were devastated by the sudden, unexpected death of Corrina Adams, a young New Traveller who was working with us as a peer researcher. The project she was working on was an important piece of research carried out in partnership with

Brighton University, looking at the use of emergency health services by Gypsies and Travellers. The final report will be published later this year and we will be dedicating the research to her memory. Corrina was a lovely person, a gifted photographer, a skilled researcher and a good friend and colleague within our staff team. We miss her very much.



What We Do

We are the only national charity that works on behalf of all Gypsies and Travellers regardless of ethnicity, culture or background.

We provide casework, advice and information to Gypsies and Travellers directly, either by phone or by outreach work to sites. We also provide advice on issues concerning the travelling communities to third party organisations.

We offer advice and advocacy for individual Gypsies and Travellers, families and communities.

We provide training and awareness raising seminars to mainstream agencies within the voluntary and statutory sectors to help them to deliver appropriate and culturally sensitive services to Gypsies and Travellers.

We disseminate and share knowledge and information about good practice for working with Gypsies and Travellers to a wide range of inquirers, including students, voluntary and statutory agencies and the media.

We provide community support, health and wellbeing outreach services to Gypsies and Travellers, helping individuals and families to access into the mainstream agencies best suited to meet their needs.

We facilitate and mentor local self support groups to empower individuals, families and communities to fulfil their potential and to take greater control over their own lives. We also work to support and build the capacity of other local grass roots Gypsy and Traveller groups and organisations.

We work with young Gypsies and Travellers to help them to overcome the barriers to inclusion that they experience and to participate more fully within mainstream society.

We carry out research, in partnership with academic institutions, to build and promote



What We Do

greater knowledge and understanding of the issues that affect the lives of the travelling communities.

Working with local individuals and groups from the travelling communities we respond to the policies and proposals of local and regional planning bodies and provide expert evidence to Examinations in Public of regional site provision/allocation strategies.

We supply expert witness statements on site provision and other Gypsy and Traveller needs at planning inquiries to assist Gypsies and Travellers to secure their own sites or to influence decisions to evict from unauthorised sites.

We participate within wider equality and diversity groups and fora to ensure that the interests of Gypsies and Travellers are not overlooked within plans and strategies aimed at developing a more just and equal society.

We work in our own right and in partnership with other Gypsy and Traveller organisations to campaign for legal reform so that the rights and needs of the travelling communities are fully and adequately addressed.



The Advice and Information Unit

A high quality front line service for Gypsies and Travellers throughout the UK

There are no accurate figures for Gypsies and Travellers in the UK, but various sources, e.g. the Council of Europe, have estimated the number at around 300,000 comprising about 200,000 housed and 100,000 in caravans.

The only other official estimate available is the bi-annual count of Gypsy caravans carried out by local authorities in England and published twice a year by Communities and Local Government. These counts are thought to be notoriously unreliable and to consistently under-represent the true figures.

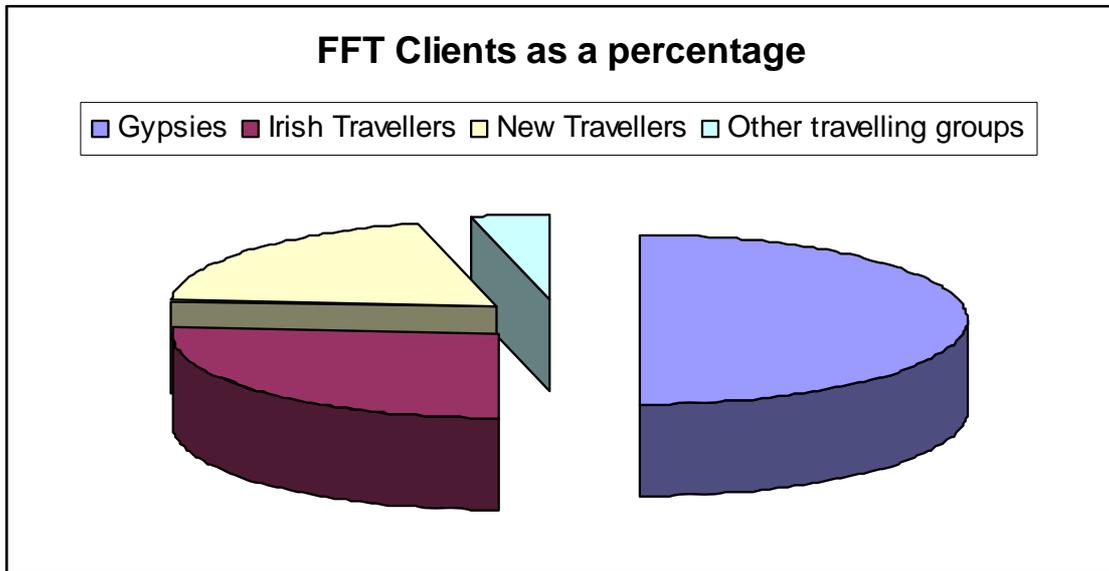
Under the Housing Act 2004 local authorities have been required to carry out Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments to enable the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers to be taken into account in the formulation of local development plans. The accuracy and robustness of these assessments has also been called in question by local groups from the travelling communities and in many cases the work has been carried out with little or no proper input from the travelling communities themselves.

Nationally best estimates would suggest that there is a need for around 4,500 new pitches - a small figure in comparison with the 3 million new bricks and mortar houses required over the next decade but hugely significant in terms of the human misery that results from lack of sites.

FFT offers advice, information and casework to all Gypsies and Travellers who seek our help and we monitor the profile of our client base to ensure that the service is reaching all sections of the travelling communities and all regions of the country.

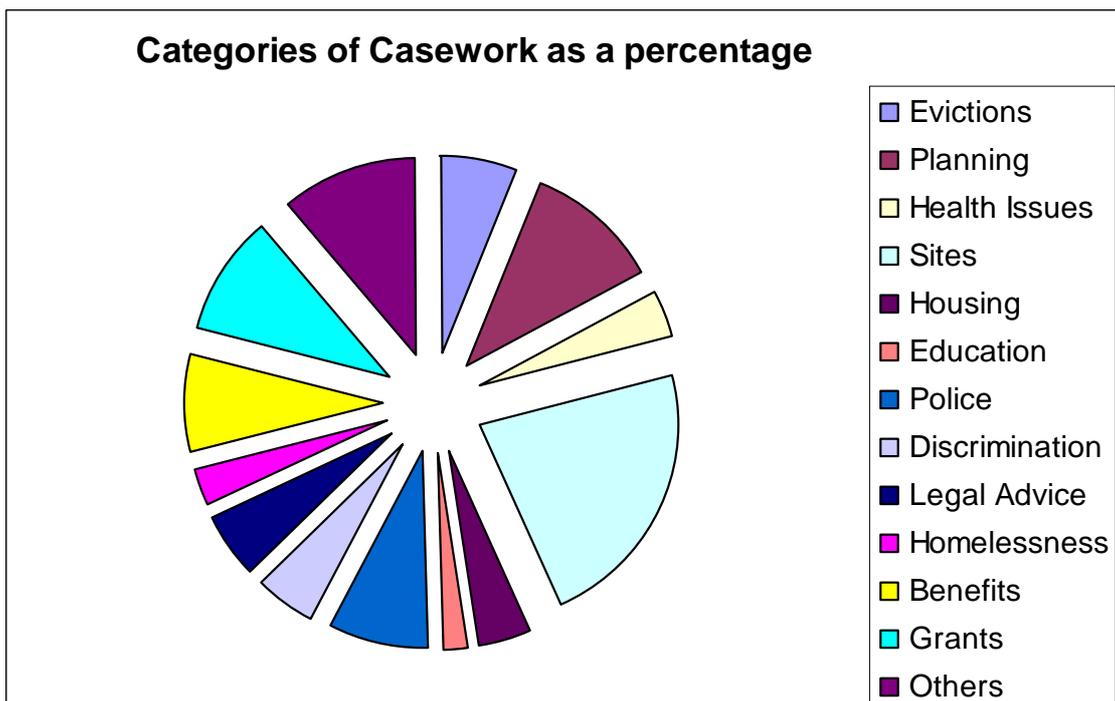


The Advice and Information Unit



During 2008/9 our caseworkers dealt with a wide variety of cases from all across mainland UK, including Wales and Scotland. Approximately 50% of all our casework was with Gypsies, 26% was with Irish Travellers and 20% was with New Travellers, and 4% with other travelling groups.

The categories of casework that we provided covered a wide range of issues and problems although, unsurprisingly, many revolved around evictions, housing and planning issues.



The Advice and Information Unit

The full breakdown is as follows -

- 6% were about evictions
- 11% were about planning
- 4% were about health issues
- 22% were about sites
- 4% were about housing
- 2% were about education
- 8% were about the police
- 5% were about discrimination
- 5% were seeking legal advice
- 3% were about homelessness
- 8% were about benefits
- 10% were about grants
- 11% other

Often clients present with multiple issues and sometimes these can overlap, making categorisation difficult. However FFT will continue to seek to improve and refine its processes for data collection whilst ensuring that strict client confidentiality remains at the forefront of the work that we do.

Emma Nuttall
Advice and Policy Manager



Case Studies

A

We attended a planning inquiry as a professional witness for a Gypsy couple in the South East regarding the planning appeal for their site in 2004. This involved arguing the need for more sites in the area. The planning appeal was unsuccessful, and the family who were living on the land, had to leave it.

In 2006 we submitted a new planning application for a Gypsy site for the land, and attended the council's planning committee meeting to speak in favour of the application. However it was refused.



In 2008 we attended another planning inquiry as a professional witness and the family succeeded in obtaining permanent planning permission for the site.

B

A Gypsy lady from London was fleeing from harassment and violence from her ex-partner. She needed help securing accommodation in another area. We helped her and her children make a homeless application in another area and they were quickly moved into temporary accommodation. They have now been moved into permanent housing and are all doing well.



Case Studies

C

An Irish Traveller living on a private site in the East of England has 5 children, 2 of which were left with long-term health problems after they had meningitis when they were very young. Her 3 year old daughter was left with bowel problems and as a result she had to do a lot of laundry and their tumble dryer was broken and she did not have the money to fix it. We applied to a variety of charitable trusts in order to alleviate the family's problems and one of these, The Frank Buttle Trust, was able to provide a grant to buy a new tumble dryer which has made life a lot easier for them.

D

Another Irish Traveller we work with in the West Midlands suffered a serious assault. This was reported to the police but unfortunately after the investigations the Criminal Prosecution Service decided not to pursue the case. However we linked the Traveller in with Victim Support to help her deal with the side effects of the attack and pursued compensation for her from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.



Policy

A key element of our work during the past year has been to contribute to national policy development and to lobby for change. We, along with the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit and the Irish Traveller Movement, are members of the Traveller Law Reform Project, which aims to bring about positive changes in the law in relation to the rights and needs of all the Traveller communities, and monitor the implementation of current legislation.

Over the past year we have lobbied local authorities and central government to re-open sites or pitches on sites that are currently closed and thus not available for the Traveller community's use. We see this as unacceptable, given the high numbers of Travellers in need of a pitch. We have also lobbied councils to apply for government grants to refurbish local authority sites; unfortunately councils can be reluctant as they are required to contribute a percentage towards the refurbishment themselves. We have also lobbied local authorities to bring forward sites, in accordance with government guidance which recommends this where there is a need (as there is in most places).

We also currently provide administrative support to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform which is a parliamentary group committed to raising the social inclusion of Travellers and improving relations between the settled and Traveller community. Meetings this year have included ones on Conservative policy and Equalities and Human Rights Commission work on Gypsy and Traveller issues.

We will continue to work with partner organisations and in our own right to try to achieve fairness and equality for all Gypsies and Travellers.



Emma Nuttall
Advice and Policy Manager

Planning

Planning policy work has continued under the aegis of the Traveller Law Reform Project. This has included numerous responses to developing Core Strategies of many Local Planning Authorities together with other planning responses including Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Documents which aim to make allocations of land which have potential for development as Gypsy and Traveller sites. This is an important part of the planning process and often our responses are the only ones made on behalf of the Travelling Communities.

We have inputted into the development of planning policy nationally, particularly pointing out the problems which have arisen with the speed of policy development.

During the year we have made a major response to regional planning for the East of England and attended the Examination In Public in October. As a result of our submissions, with others, there have been small increases made by the Planning Inspectorate in pitch allocation numbers to local authorities in the East Region. Additionally our submissions have pointed up the problems with the assessment process and we hope that in due course these issues will be addressed by Government via a revision of the Guidance for carrying out accommodation needs assessments for Gypsies and Travellers. This is a reflection of the important and unique role of the planning work.

Of increasing concern are issues relating to delivery of much needed sites. The existing central Government grant will only provide for a small part of the overall need. Indeed most of the money already spent (£54 million '06-08) has been spent on refurbishment of existing sites. Since 2006 only 42 new non-private pitches have been provided and a further 24 disused pitches brought back into use. At this rate of provision it will take many years to meet the shortfall and meanwhile thousands of people remain essentially homeless with no legitimate site on which to place their home.



Steve Staines
Planning

Staff



Chris Whitwell, BSc, MA.
Director of Friends, Families and Travellers

Chris was appointed Director in March 2006. He was previously working with FFT on a consultancy basis having held senior positions in the public and voluntary sectors.

Emma Nuttall, BA.
Advice and Policy Manager

Emma initially started working for FFT as a volunteer. She is now the Advice Work Manager and has been working for FFT for over 10 years. Emma has a key role in policy work and represents the organisation in a number of national fora.



Abbie Kirkby
Caseworker

Abbie has been working with FFT as a national caseworker since July 2007. Her background includes working with marginalised communities both in England and abroad.

Sarah Mann, BSc
Traveller Advice Project Officer

Sarah joined FFT in August 2007. Her background is in community and environmental work, managing projects and training in the public and voluntary sectors.



Staff

Zoe Matthews RMN, BA (Hons) MA.

Health Improvement Manager

Zoe is a trained Psychiatric Nurse with a degree in Anthropology and Sociology and has an MA in Health Promotion, where she specialised in the Health of Gypsies and Travellers. Initially joining as a volunteer, Zoe has now been working with FFT for nine years.



Avril Fuller.

Community Outreach Worker

Avril is of Gypsy heritage and started as a volunteer with FFT before becoming a paid member of staff in 2003. Her background is with Traveller Education Services. Avril specialises in working with vulnerable people/learning difficulties/disabilities.

Marya Sadouni

Community Support Worker

Marya, a Romany Gypsy, joined FFT in 2008, having previously been a volunteer. She worked previously as a carer in the healthcare profession and trained as a Doula nurse. She also works with FFT on an oral hygiene project: helping members of the community access dental services.



Gemma Challenger

Well-being Support Worker

Gemma is a New Traveller and started with FFT in February 2007. Her background is in learning disabilities.

Staff



Rebekah (Bex) Dilley
Community Support Worker

Bek joined FFT in April 2008 as one of our two Community Support Workers. From a Traveller background, Bex has worked in a number of previous posts including managing the security at fairs and festivals and managing the Brighton Pride Parade. She is a most welcome addition to the FFT Team contributing lots of creative and innovative ideas about service development.

Clare Bingham, MA.
Young Person's Co-ordinator
MA in Applied Anthropology, Youth and Community Work at Goldsmith University. Clare's background is working with young homeless people including street homeless and sexual health outreach worker and later as a youth worker.



Lisa Bruton
Mental Health and Well Being Community Development Worker (maternity cover)
Joined FFT in Oct 2008 and will be staying on with FFT as a Community Development Worker. Lisa's background is in research into mental health and offenders. She is currently working towards an accreditation as a psychotherapist.

Suzanna King.
Finance Officer
Suzanna joined FFT in November 2005. Her background is in arts administration, working in Young People's and Children's Theatre.



Our Consultant Experts

Our Annual Report would not be complete without a word of gratitude to two former members of staff who, although no longer on the payroll, are still an important part of the Friends, Families and Travellers organisation and who carry out specialist work for us from time to time on a consultancy basis.

Steve Staines, who was one of the original founders of FFT, worked for us for two years as Planning Officer, funded by the Allen Lane Foundation and Garden Court Chambers, to whom we are profoundly grateful. Although Steve is no longer funded to work directly for FFT the Traveller Law Reform Project (of which we are a partner) has been able to retain his services in order to enable the vital planning work that he does to continue. Steve fulfils a unique role in testing and challenging the extent to which local authorities are making proper provision for Gypsies and Travellers within their Development Plans and you can read his comments elsewhere in this Annual Report.

Tammy Furey has been a highly valued member of Friends, Families and Travellers for about eight years. Although, following the birth of her daughter, Megan, she is no longer an employee of FFT, she continues to provide valuable services on an ad-hoc consultancy basis, particularly around IT, the maintenance of our website and the production of our Annual Reports and other literature.



Join Our Organisation



We are a membership organisation and we welcome new members. Membership runs from 1 April - 31 March each year and individual subscription rates are £10 per annum or £5 unwaged. Organisations may also join for an annual subscription of £25.

Membership entitles you to receive our quarterly Newsletter and to

attend and vote at our Annual General Meetings. We are always pleased to hear from our members and to talk to them about the work that we are doing and, importantly, membership of our organisation means that you are helping us in our struggle to bring an end to the racism, marginalisation and social exclusion suffered by the travelling communities.

If you would like to join us simply contact Suzanna on 01273 234777 or email her at admin@gypsy-traveller.org.



Partnership Working

We believe that, if we are to bring about positive and lasting change, we need to develop and strengthen our partnerships with all those other organisations that are working on behalf of Gypsies and Travellers. Progress on site provision remains desperately slow and we need to keep up the pressure on the Government and on local authorities to ensure that the fine words that are spoken and promises made get translated into positive action on the ground.

We are committed to working in partnership, and will continue to participate fully in the Traveller Law Reform Project in partnership with the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain, and the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit. We will continue to link closely with the Travellers Advice Team to whom we refer cases that require a specialist legal input. We will also work collaboratively with the many other groups that are doing vital work all around the country such as the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group, the South West Alliance of Nomads, the Roma Support group and the newly emerging Southern Network of Gypsies and Irish Travellers. There are links to these and to around 50 other such organisations on our website at www.gypsy-traveller.org.



Reaching Communities



LOTTERY FUNDED

In April 2008 we started a new five year project funded by the 'Reaching Communities' programme of the Big Lottery, and this led to the recruitment of two new Community Support Workers to our outreach team.

We have always carried out our outreach support on a 'whole family' holistic basis and when our outreach staff were visiting families to help them to access their health and social care needs it was becoming apparent that there could be a whole range of other support needs that the family had which were not being met. These might range from welfare benefit or housing issues to needing help in accessing other basic services, and might well amount to the sort of support that a Citizens Advice Bureau might typically offer. However it was clear that families needed help and support, beyond mere signposting, in order to be able to access these advice services and also that the providers themselves needed to gain a better understanding and ability to meet the needs of their local Travelling communities. This was the basis of the Reaching Communities Project - working to support families across East Sussex but also acting as a vital conduit between the community and the service providers to help make their services more accessible. We were fortunate to be able to recruit two excellent new members of staff, Rebekah Dilley and Marya Sadouni, both of whom are from the Travelling communities. They in turn have identified other people from within the community who are prepared to act as volunteers and to be mentored to become 'champions' for their own community. The fact that the funding is for five years gives us the opportunity to develop the project over time in such a way as to ensure that we are using the most effective methods of accessing the communities and empowering them to identify and meet their own needs.



During the same year we were also grateful to receive one year funding from the new Equality and Human Rights Commission under its Interim Funding Programme to deliver a similar project in

Reaching Communities

West Sussex and east Hampshire. These two projects together demonstrated how much our support services are needed and over the course of the year we have helped hundreds of families across the County and worked with dozens of service providing organisations. Now that the EHRC project has come to an end we are requesting the Big Lottery to allow us to operate the Reaching Communities project across the whole of Sussex, particularly since many of our clients are highly mobile and may migrate from one part of the County to the other over the course of a year.

Traveller Advice Project



The Traveller Advice Project funded by the Big Lottery aimed help mainstream agencies in the South East improve their capacity to provide appropriate and culturally sensitive services to Gypsies & Travellers.

2008/9 marked the final full year of the project, by which time we had trained delegates from over 150 organisations in the South East including



Reaching & the Gypsy & Traveller Community

North West Kent Racial Equality Council (NWK REC) with Friends, Families & Travellers (FFT) invites

Statutory Agencies
Voluntary Agencies
Small Community Groups

to a training programme on Reaching the Gypsy and the Traveller Community and working towards a more equitable society where everyone has the right to travel and to stop without constant fear of persecution because of their lifestyle.

Date: Thursday, 1st May, 2008

Venue: Riverside Centre, Dickens Road, Gravesend DA12 2JY

Time: 10am - 2pm

Fees: £50 statutory sector, £25 voluntary sector, Free for small community groups.

Please see the form attached for registration details

Citizens Advice Bureaux, Police, Housing Associations, CAF/CASS, Age Concern, Local Authorities, Shelter, NHS Trusts, Fire & Rescue Services, British Red Cross, Race Equality Councils, National Childbirth Trust, HM Prisons, RPTI, Refuges, MIND and YMCA. The project ended in August 2009 and next year's Annual Report will contain a full write up of what has been achieved as a result of this work. What has been clear though is the encouraging extent to which representatives of service providing agencies attending the training have been inspired to return to their



Traveller Advice Project

own organisation and make changes to the way their services are delivered. This has been a very successful project, bringing about real and positive change to the way that organisations work, and we are most grateful to the Big Lottery for funding it.

Although strictly 2009/10 rather than the year that this Annual Report covers, it would be remiss not to mention the landmark Conference that took place, as part of this project, at the beginning of May 2009. This was the first ever national Conference on Domestic Violence in the Travelling Communities and it attracted over 160 delegates from all over the country. Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women is a big issue within the Travelling communities and has been something of a taboo subject. It was enormously encouraging at the Conference to hear women Travellers speaking out about this issue, sharing their own experiences and beginning the long journey that will lead to an end to these unacceptable abuses of power.

Sarah Mann
Project Officer



Sussex Travellers Health Project

The Sussex Traveller Health Project was launched in 2003, originally with funding from Volunteering England. The project aimed to engage Gypsy and Traveller women to identify their own health needs and then to support and work with these women, to address some of the issues that they had chosen as their priorities.

We have built on the experience of this project to develop a new approach towards helping travelling families to overcome the barriers they face in accessing health and social care services that most of us take for granted.

It is through our outreach work that we have been able to engage with some individuals and families who have largely been 'invisible' to the services that should be there to help and support them. Our team works to bridge those people into services and support them during this process.

As a result of our outreach work we are able to identify the many barriers that people face in accessing services: These can include a fear of discrimination; difficulties in accessing primary health care services; poor access to preventative information and services; bureaucratic systems which do not allow for a nomadic existence, whether that be chosen or enforced through frequent evictions; institutional racism and a lack of ethnic monitoring which makes it difficult to prove the 'need' for culturally sensitive and appropriate services.

The extent of marginalisation, social exclusion and deprivation that we have uncovered in the course of our work will shock many people. The health outcomes are poorer than with any other minority group.

A recent literature review for the Equality and Human Rights Commission showed that the health inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers appears to be widening rather than narrowing. The 2004 'Health Status of Travellers in England report' by Sheffield University accepted that life



Sussex Travellers Health Project

expectancy was between 10 and 12 years less than the settled population. It has now been accepted by the DoH that this figure is likely to be nearer 20 years less than the life expectancy for the rest of the population. We know that infant mortality is at least three times higher than the national average and that a Gypsy mother is twenty times more likely to experience the death of a child before they reach eighteen years of age. Recent research on suicide in Ireland has shown that Travellers are three times more likely to commit suicide; we suspect that it may be higher in England but without sufficient monitoring this is hard to quantify.

The health team at FFT work to support Gypsies and Travellers in and around Sussex as well as campaigning and lobbying for improved health provision for Gypsies and Travellers at a policy level. We use our experience of local work to inform Government departments and Race Equality groups of the issues that we find. I manage a team of six people, consisting of:

Avril Fuller, who is herself a Gypsy woman, continues to inform Gypsies and Travellers of the services provided by Adult Social Care in East Sussex and to access Gypsies and Travellers into Adult Social Care and other support services provided by ASC, where it is needed.

Gemma Challenger is a new Traveller who works as a Well-Being Support Worker. This involves working with people from the travelling community to access mental health services; from getting a G.P. through the assessment process and into the specific mental health services, both statutory and voluntary. Gemma provides information on the process involved in accessing mental health services to people with little or no experience or knowledge of the services. In addition to this Gemma helps people source more information on their conditions and works with them to develop their own self help strategies, for example diet or relaxation techniques.



Sussex Travellers Health Project

Over six months of Community Support Work with FFT Gemma has found Anxiety, Depression and Panic attacks to be the most common mental health conditions with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder also being quite common. A huge mistrust and fear of services and high levels of stigma attached to the term 'mental health' and anything associated with it such as counselling has been highlighted through work with Traveller Communities. In many Gypsy and Traveller communities 'mental health' tends to be associated with psychosis rather than more common conditions such as depression, stress and anxiety this act's as a major barrier to some people accessing the mental health services.

We have started working with Rethink this year, managing one of the BME Community Development Worker posts as part of the new Delivering Race Equality Programmes which will provide 500 new workers to access BME people, including Gypsies and Travellers into mental health and well being services. This post is occupied by Jazka Atterbury (currently on maternity leave having given birth to twins) and Lisa Bruton who is covering for Lisa during her leave. Lisa reports that:

'We have done a lot of work with Community Mental health teams, both those working with adults and young children. We have met with all the teams in West Sussex. We have found that in many cases staff are keen to engage with Travellers but may not now to do so. To this aim we provided training for staff as well as written materials to guide them and share with others. We also ran training sessions with voluntary Mental Health organizations such as Mind and did an extensive piece of training work with staff at HMP Lewes. This was to reach other areas such as the Criminal Justice system which, while not directly linked with mental health, has an obvious impact on the Well being of people who go through the system. We are also developing culturally appropriate leaflets on Mental Health and Well Being for our clients, and are currently



Sussex Travellers Health Project

bidding for funding to produce these leaflets in audio format for our clients with low literacy levels'.

Clare Bingham is a key member of the team, working with over one hundred Gypsy and Traveller children and young people. A qualified youth worker, Clare has worked in an imaginative and innovative way to build the confidence of young people in the travelling communities. Clare has both fund raised and led on a number of popular excursions for young people.

Finally the team also consists of two Community Development Workers who are funded to pick up all of the other issues that the Outreach team pick up as they go along. Marya Sadouni is a Romany Gypsy and Rebekah Dilley (Bex) is part of the New Traveller community. Their remit is very varied and they can be signposting people into services ranging from dental services to debt advice. Bex organised a very successful programme of events for Gypsies and Travellers to come together and work on health issues whilst engaging in other activities ranging from belly dancing to baby massage.

As well as the usual Outreach and Support work, the health team have been involved with a number of projects, including oral health promotion and a piece of research looking at Urgent Care use by Gypsies and Travellers.

We believe that we have developed a model of working in Sussex that should be rolled out to other areas and to other regions and we look forward to taking this innovative approach forward over the next year.

Zoe Matthews
Health Improvement Manager



Youth Work

Since February 2008 we have been working with young people across Sussex on a three year project funded by BBC Children In Need. We were very fortunate to be able to recruit Clare Bingham, who is a qualified Youth Worker, to the post of Young Persons Coordinator and, since the start of the project, she has worked with well in excess of 100 young people across the County. The task can be particularly challenging because Clare works with some of the most deprived and socially excluded young people living in the County. Some are so-called roadsiders living with their parents or guardians on 'unauthorised' sites and thus likely to be moved on at any time. For these young people there is virtually no contact with the outside world; they can be stuck in remote locations far from public transport facilities and totally unable to access the recreational facilities that most young people take for granted. They may only mix with their siblings and be living on sites that have little or no play facilities available to them. Although they may attend school, they may be on restricted timetables and experience the bullying, discrimination and racism against Travellers that stills occur in groups of young people. Education can still be a rather negative experience for young Gypsies and Travellers, despite the excellent and dedicated work of the Traveller Education Services, and the fact that these services no longer receive ring-fenced funding may be a contributory factor to the falling educational attainments that we have witnessed in the Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities in recent years.

Clare works to support young Gypsies and Travellers, to build their confidence and help them access into the normal activities enjoyed by young people in the community. She provides individual support and mentoring but also arranges exciting programmes of group activities during school holiday times as a means of retaining their interest and enthusiasm. Importantly she designs her work programmes



Youth Work

around the ideas, needs and wishes of the young people themselves so that they feel valued and respected.

We are immensely grateful to the funding support that we receive from BBC Children in Need and also to West Sussex County Council who have provided a small sum of supplementary funding. However, it is impossible for Clare to maintain the levels of activity that are needed to provide proper support for so many young people across such a wide geographical area.

We are seeking to secure additional funding in order to be able to recruit a second youth worker so that Clare's work load becomes more manageable. In the meanwhile Clare continues to have creative and innovative ideas about how to engage with young people, build their confidence, help them to achieve and provide them with the ongoing support that they need.



Income and Expenditure Account:

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2009 £	Total 2008 £
Incoming Resources					
Incoming resources from generated funds:					
Grants	2	641	352,629	353,270	262,214
Donations		418	-	418	605
Bank Interest		3,956	-	3,956	4,674
Incoming resources from charitable activities					
Fees, subscriptions and publication sales		<u>23,952</u>	<u>31,542</u>	<u>55,494</u>	<u>11,207</u>
Total Incoming Resources		<u>28,967</u>	<u>384,171</u>	<u>413,138</u>	<u>278,700</u>
Resources Expended					
Charitable activities	3	14,626	347,527	362,153	254,347
Governance costs	3	<u>2,639</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,639</u>	<u>2,474</u>
Total Resources Expended		<u>17,265</u>	<u>347,527</u>	<u>364,792</u>	<u>256,821</u>
Net Incoming Resources before transfers	4	11,702	36,644	48,346	21,879
Transfers		<u>(2,866)</u>	<u>2,866</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
		8,836	39,510	48,346	21,879
Fund Balances brought forward		<u>44,452</u>	<u>39,768</u>	<u>84,220</u>	<u>62,341</u>
Fund Balances carried forward		<u>53,288</u>	<u>79,278</u>	<u>132,566</u>	<u>84,220</u>

The full report and financial statements are available on request from:

FFT,
Community Base,
113 Queens Road,
Brighton, East Sussex,
BN1 3XG



With grateful thanks to our funders and partners:

We could not achieve the many projects and services which we deliver without the help of our funders on whom we rely in order to survive as an organisation.

We are indebted to -



The Big Lottery who fund our Reaching Communities project and who funded our successful Regional Traveller Advice Project.

LOTTERY FUNDED

The Equality and Human Rights Commission who funded our community support work in West Sussex and east Hampshire



East Sussex County Council and Sompriti who were joined in with us as partners in our Social Care outreach work, funded by Invest to Save Round 8.

Brighton and Hove City Primary Care Trust who funded our health outreach work and the partnerships for Health programme that funded our research on the use of Accident and Emergency Services in partnership with Brighton University.

Brighton and Hove City 
Teaching Primary Care Trust



Garden Court Chambers who continue to fund our vital planning work.

Lankelly Chase Foundation who fund our Mental Health and Wellbeing work



The Woodward Charitable Trust who part fund the work of our telephone caseworker

The Emigrant Services Department of the Irish Government who fund some of our work on behalf of Irish Travellers



The Tudor Trust who provide us with much needed core funding

the
Tudortrust

With grateful thanks to our funders and partners:



BBC Children in Need and West Sussex County Council who fund our work with young people



Sussex Partnership Trust who fund our Community Development Worker (Mental Health) under a contract won in partnership with Rethink and the Crawley Ethnic Minority Partnership

Finally we would like to thank FFT members, partners and colleagues in scores of other organisations who have given us help, encouragement and support over the year and without whom we could not have made nearly as much progress on behalf of the communities that we serve.

