



**Friends, Families and Travellers  
Annual Report  
2004 - 2006**

**Charity Number 1112326**

# Friends, Families & Travellers

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## Introduction to FFT

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

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 and had grown into to 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.

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*FFT's mission statement is to work towards a more equitable society where everyone has the right to travel and to stop without fear of persecution because of their lifestyle.*

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FFT's ongoing work in this field gained recognition when the organisation was short-listed for the Human Rights Award in 1999. Taking this work forward, FFT was one of the three lead agencies in the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition.

FFT is a membership organisation run by a Management Committee, which is currently made up of eight Directors, four of whom are Travellers and two who are lawyers specialising in Traveller issues. FFT is a registered charity (1112326) and a non-profit making company limited by guarantee (No. 3597515).



## Report of the Director - Chris Whitwell

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I am delighted to have the opportunity to introduce this report which covers the periods from 1 August 2004 to 31 July 2005, and 1 August 2005 to 31 March 2006. The Trustee Board made the decision earlier this year to change the organisation's reporting year to run from April - March and, rather than producing a separate Annual Report to cover an eight month span, they decided to wrap the whole of this crucial period into a single Annual Report. In future years Annual Reports will be published, together with the organisation's Accounts, and made available to the membership at the time of the AGM.

This period has been one of transition for Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) and one that has seen some key staff changes. Last autumn we welcomed Clare Bingham, our new caseworker, and Suzanna King our new book-keeper/ administrator, replacing Anna Hinton who left us in September 2005. Since the beginning of 2005 FFT has been without a National Co-ordinator following the departure of Rob Whitehead, the previous post-holder, and so was not able to deal with the key strategic, organisational and developmental matters that needed to be addressed. I was pleased to be asked in May 2005 to assist FFT with some of these matters in a consultancy capacity and have greatly enjoyed the opportunity to work with an exceptional team of committed and talented staff. I have recently accepted an appointment as Director of FFT and look forward to building up the capacity of the organisation to develop a wide range of projects and services on behalf of all Gypsies and Travellers.

We were able to gain Charity status towards the end of 2005 and this will be of great significance in enabling us to access funding streams that were denied to us hitherto. In the early months of 2006 we received some positive funding decisions that will place the organisation on a much sounder financial footing, and we are grateful to the Big Lottery Fund, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Allen Lane Foundation, Garden



Court Chambers, East Sussex County Council and others for recognising the need for the work that we do to help Gypsies and Travellers, and enabling us to extend and develop those vital services. Most of all, we are grateful to the Travellers Aid Trust without whose continuing support the organisation would not have survived.

As it is, the immediate future of the organisation is secure and we will continue to provide help, information and casework to Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers and other Travellers to help them to overcome the barriers to mainstream services that they continue to face.

This is a crucial time for Gypsies and Travellers. After years of struggle, deprivation and social exclusion, the need for law and policy makers to take positive action to redress this unacceptable situation is finally being recognised. The new Planning Circular, issued at the beginning of 2006, places greater duties on local authorities to make provision for sites, and this change of emphasis is slowly permeating through the machinery of local authority policy making. Progress is slow and there is still much to be achieved but, at last, there is the feeling after years of prejudice and discrimination that positive change is being achieved. Much of this change is due to the work of the former Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition in which FFT was an active participant. It is vital that groups and organisations concerned with Gypsy and Traveller issues continue to work together to ensure that the ground that has been gained is not lost.

I do hope that you will take the opportunity to look at this Annual Report to see the wide range of work that we do - the extensive casework service provided by Emma Nuttall and Clare Bingham, the innovative health improvement work carried out by Zoe Matthews, Avril Fuller and Sally Burnett, and the Cyberpilots project led by Tammy Furey, which was brought to a successful conclusion earlier this year. We are proud of the work that we do to further the cause of Gypsies and Travellers, and we will continuously seek to develop and improve our services to meet the needs of those communities.



## What We Do

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We provide advice and information to Gypsies and Travellers directly, either by phone, personal visit to our office or by outreach work to sites. We also provide advice on issues affecting Gypsies and Travellers to third party organisations.

We offer legal advice and advocacy for individual Travellers, groups and families.

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

We disseminate information on Gypsy and Traveller issues to a wide range of inquirers, including students, local authorities and other statutory bodies, other non-government organisations and the media.

We liaise with lawyers, legal organisations, local authorities, voluntary organisations and the police in relation to casework or policy development.

We publish educational and research material to inform Gypsy and Traveller communities and to provide information about Gypsy and Traveller communities and their environment to others.

We develop and deliver projects to benefit Gypsy and Traveller communities.

We carry out research into issues that affect Gypsies and Travellers and their families.

We work with other Gypsy and Traveller organisations to lobby for change.



## The Advice and Information Unit

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*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 the Council of Europe has estimated that they number around 300,000 with 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 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now the Department for Communities and Local Government). The figures published for July 2005 show the national total number of caravans counted as 15711, an increase of 702 caravans since July 2004. Of these, 4067 were on unauthorised encampments.

Geographically both the highest numbers of caravans and the levels of unauthorised encampment were found to be in the East, with the South East and South West showing the second and third highest numbers respectively.

### **Advice and Information Unit casework:**

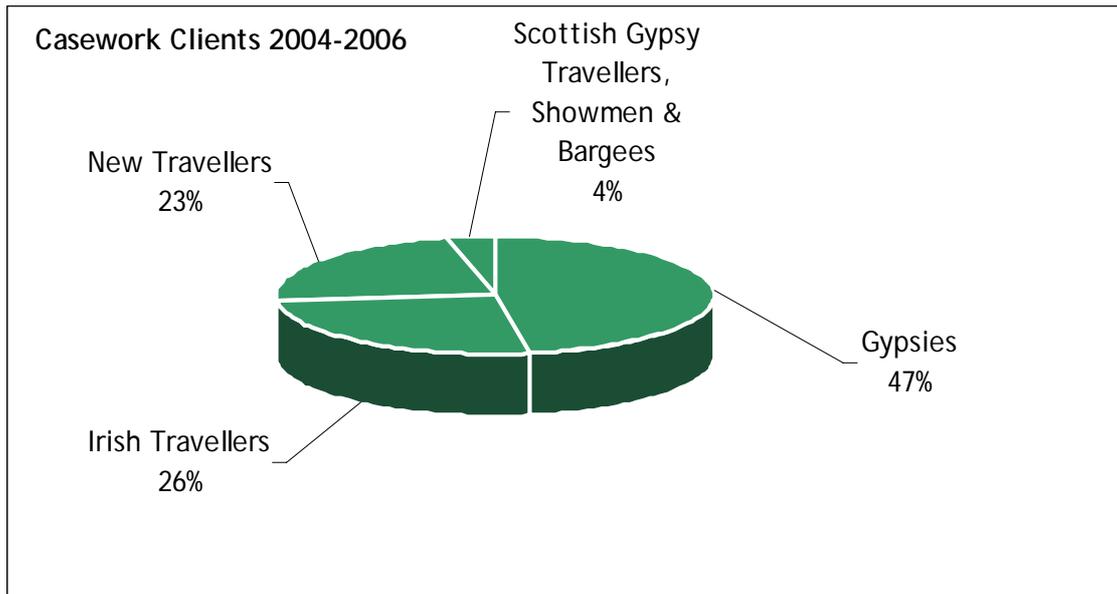
FFT offers advice, information and casework to all Gypsies and Travellers and monitors the profile of the client base to ensure that the service is reaching all sections of those communities and all regions of the country.

During the report period, the Unit staff dealt with over 296 cases. Of these, 47.5% were on behalf of Gypsies, 26% were on behalf of new Travellers, 23% were on behalf of Irish Travellers and 3.5% on behalf of Scottish Gypsy Travellers, Bargees and Showmen. Every effort is taken to ensure that cases are managed and monitored to Legal Services Commission standards.



## The Advice and Information Unit

Not only does FFT deal with the largest number of cases of any Gypsy and Traveller organisation in the country, it is the only organisation carrying out casework on behalf of new Travellers and Irish Travellers at a national level.



As a national organisation with a single office base in Brighton much of our casework is conducted via the telephone and we monitor telephone calls in order to analyse the geographical distribution of our work across the UK. In the report period, the Advice and Information Unit received nearly two and a half thousand calls from across the UK, with the largest concentration in the South

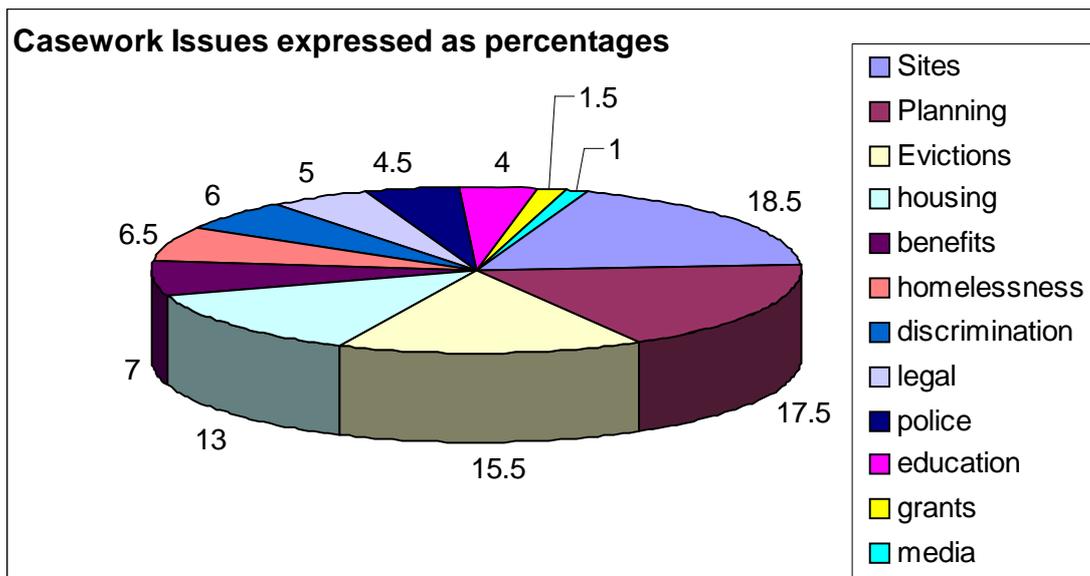
### The categories of casework provided

The categories of casework that we provided to Gypsies and Travellers during 2004/6 covered a wide range of issues and problems. Most however revolved around evictions and the non-availability of sites. The full breakdown is as follows -

- 18.5% were about sites
- 17.5% were about planning matters



- 15.5% were about eviction
- 13% were about housing
- 7% were about benefits
- 6.5% related to homelessness
- 6% were about discrimination
- 5% related to legal matters
- 4.5% were about the police
- 4% related to education
- 1.5% were about grants
- 1% were about the media



Of course many of these issues overlap and often clients would present with more than one problem, which makes statistical analysis difficult. During 2006/07 FFT will be examining the possibilities for improving the statistical monitoring to provide data that can be aggregated with data from other sources to build a more statistically robust picture of the problems that Gypsies and Travellers are facing. In doing so FFT will ensure that its strict code of confidentiality is adhered to at all times and that information will only be collected and analysed on a totally anonymous basis.



## Staff

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**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, Unit Manager**

Emma initially started working for FFT as a volunteer. She is now the Unit Manager and has been working for FFT for nearly 6 years. She is a senior caseworker and represents the organisation at a local and national level.



**Clare Bigham, Caseworker, MA in Applied Anthropology, Youth and Community Work at Goldsmith University.**

Her background is working with young homeless people including street homeless and sexual health outreach worker and later as a youth worker.

**Suzanna King, Administrator/book keeper.**

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



## Project Staff

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Zoe Matthews RMN, BA (Hons) MA is the Health Project Manager, 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 six years.

**Avril Fuller, Health Outreach Worker.**  
I am of Gypsy Heritage. Avril has volunteered with FFT from 1999 onwards and became an outreach worker with FFT in 2003. Her background is with Traveller Education Services. Avril specialises in working with vulnerable people/learning difficulties/disabilities.



**Sally Burnett, Health Advisor.**

I have been working for FFT for about a year. Prior to that I was working as a full time health visitor. I am also qualified as a midwife.

**Tammy Furey, BA, MSc CyberPilots Web Development Manager.**

Tammy joined FFT in 2001. She also designs FFT's website - [www.Gypsy-Traveller.org](http://www.Gypsy-Traveller.org), the CyberPilot website, FFT's newsletter and the G&TLRC website.



## Case Studies

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*A*

This case study relates to Gypsy man in his fifties in the South East who contacted the Unit after his wife left him to care for their children. The man was illiterate and living on the roadside, without an authorised site. The Unit helped him access benefits he was entitled to, wrote letters to the benefits agency, obtained a birth certificate for him and provided an address for benefits correspondence as he has no permanent address.

*B*

This case relates to a retired couple living on a housing estate in the East Midlands. The husband was a Gypsy and was disabled. The couple were experiencing a lot of racially motivated harassment from a neighbour, and the wife was at her wits end as she was already enduring the strain of caring for her ill husband. Despite requests for help, no one in authority was doing anything about the harassment. The Unit contacted the housing department, the Racial Equality Council and the police about the matter. As a result the police launched an investigation and forwarded evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service.

*C*

This relates to a New Traveller in the South East, who was living in a van with his son and had made a homeless application to his local authority for housing. The local authority had concluded that the man was "not in priority need" of accommodation, and stated that they did not believe the man's son lived with him as "The Council believe, should X be predominately residing with you in a van without washing or laundry facilities it would become apparent to staff at his school." The Unit wrote to the local authority, asking for a review of their decision, and succeeded in overturning the original decision with the local authority accepting a duty to accommodate. The Unit also complained about the local authority's remarks, which the



client had found offensive, and a written apology was given.

*D*

This case study relates to an Irish Traveller single mother with five children, one of whom is disabled. The mother contacted the Unit having bought a plot on a private site in the South East which had not obtained planning permission. There were no toilets or washing facilities on the plot, and a water bill in arrears from the previous occupant. The Unit contacted the local Gypsy Liaison Officer, who offered to assist the woman with the water bill, and obtaining a portaloo and a health visitor. Two weeks later the woman rang us again, as she had to leave her pitch due to planning permission not being obtained. We rang several local authorities trying to find her a vacant pitch on a site, and due to the huge national shortage of authorised pitches this proved difficult to find. We obtained her a temporary licence of two months on a local authority site in the South East, which was due to be refurbished and consequently cleared. After this the woman and her children had to return to the roadside.



Avril Fuller, Women's Health Project Outreach Worker, (pictured on the right) with two women from the project on an exchange trip to Pavee Point in Ireland.

Avril is from a Traveller background and originally joined FFT as a volunteer.



## Sussex Traveller Women's Health Project

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We have now completed the initial project, which has been a huge learning curve for each of us and a notable success for FFT. The project set out to work with Traveller Women to identify their own health needs and then to provide training for them to meet some of those needs. Our aim was to support Traveller

Women and to enable them to develop into health advocates for their own communities.

We have worked with some amazing people who, despite adversity, have all made valuable contributions to the project. We want to continue to support these women if we can into the next phase of the project. However, the focus of the project will change as we now want to develop ways of helping Traveller Women to overcome the barriers of access to mainstream services that have existed for far too long. We are already working with a specialist Traveller Health Visitor to provide a culturally appropriate service to Travellers, having identified a huge gap in service provision for many parts of the community.

Following on from the seminal 'Health Status of Travellers' report published in 2004 we now have proof of the cultural health divide that exists. We now want to work with the Primary Care Trusts and with local authority Social Services to bridge that gap in access to mainstream services. We believe that as a third sector organisation working for Travellers we are ideally suited to undertake this new initiative, which will build upon the experience we have gained through the life of the existing project.

**Zoe Matthews**  
Project Manager



# Sussex Traveller Women's Health Project



## *Arts and Crafts*

The project has utilised Arts and Health funding to facilitate a series of workshops making a banner for the project. Art and crafts workshops present a good forum for informal communication and the exchange of ideas. Craft activities are a useful forum for bringing people together to discuss and explore ideas.

## *Training Programme*

The project aims to work with Travellers to identify health needs and interests and set up learning opportunities and exchanges with support from the Outreach worker.



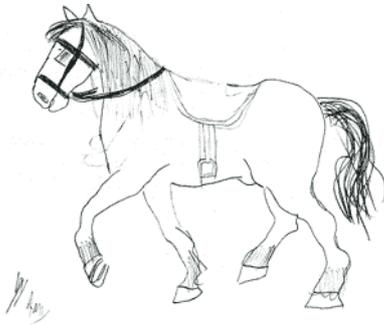
## CyberPilot Project

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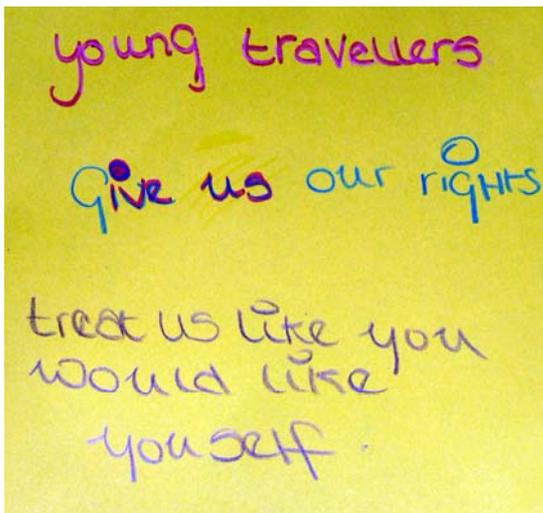
The CyberPilots have been working with **Essex Library Buses**, visiting Gypsy Traveller sites. The CyberPilot manager has been working with digital cameras, recording equipment and videos to document Traveller and Gypsy life. Some of this work can be viewed on the CyberPilot

website. See movies and pictures of trailers, cats, dogs, horses, canaries and chickens!



The CyberPilot website continues to grow with more poems, stories, photos, movies and drawings. The E-pals message board is very popular with young Gypsy Travellers, with an average of 20 messages per week.

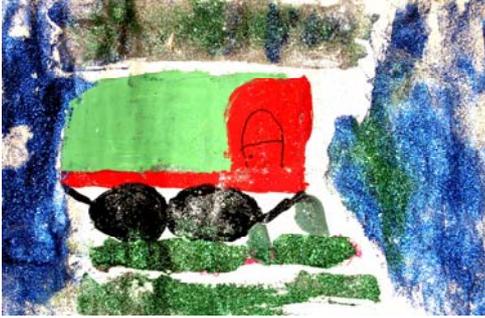
The adult section of the CyberPilot has been developed as a resource for Youth workers, teachers, parents and guardians. This section includes notes on all the CyberPilot projects, media articles, books for and about Young Gypsy and Travellers, Government and Voluntary sector reports, links, contacts, downloadable resources and more



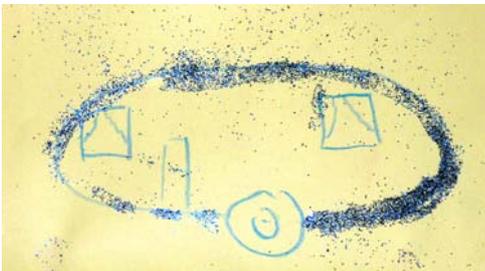
The G&TLRC Youth Conference 2005, organised by CyberPilots and YWCA, was a great success with fabulous contributions by Young Gypsy Travellers. There was a full programme of events including workshops by the Children's Society, Save the Children Scotland, London Gypsy and Traveller Unit, Traveller and Gypsy Community Development Project (Glasgow), Hull GATE/Northern Network, Richard O'Neil and Margaret Stokes.

The Young People spoke about how they felt to be Gypsy and Travellers and what they would like to say to politicians and leaders in the face of prejudice in the UK today. Here is an example of some of their work:





- We need more sites
- Schools should be aware of our culture. That is the problem I have. One teacher said "All Gypsies and Travellers are dirty and thieves".
- At the moment, I am living in my Granny and Grandad's yard. We need more official sites.
- Living on a Green Lane is very peaceful and you get more fresh air than living in a house, and you get closer to nature.



- Need more transit sites, as there is only one transit site in Darlington.
- You can get families who have lived on a site for years and a new family pulls on and makes a mess, all Travellers get blamed.
- Travellers are either all good or all bad to settled people, they don't see it might be just one family causing trouble.
- We cant get doctors or anything and we get treated differently too. It is not good how people treat us. Police look down on us.
- We need more transport, as I am stuck in the countryside.
- I would like electric and water please



These comments were read out by Janie Codona at the main G&TLRC conference. The Young People's art and comments have been made into a pack that will be sent to the leaders of the main political parties and other interested political bodies to represent the views of Young Gypsy Travellers. The Youth Conference was later covered in the "Traveller's Times", Issue 22, Summer 2005.



# Income and Expenditure Account:

For the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006.

<u>TURNOVER</u>		Period 01.08.05 to 31.03.06		Year Ended 31.07.05	
		£	£	£	£
Sales		359		703	
Grants		122,581		136,291	
Donations		83		501	
Membership		372		645	
Fees and Other Income		<u>547</u>		<u>1,000</u>	
			123,942		139,140
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>					
Rent		2,763		4,173	
Cleaning		105		94	
Project costs		1,789		3,803	
Wages		59,361		90,064	
Recruitment		905		-	
Freelance worker		4,256		-	
Consultancy		4,727		-	
Subscriptions		123		206	
Telephone		3,526		3,542	
Post and stationery		4,249		3,876	
Travel and subsistence		5,908		5,654	
Insurance		1,456		877	
Staff training		2,376		2,493	
Repairs and renewals		47		316	
Computer costs		1,372		4,325	
Sundry expenses		791		541	
Accountancy		765		1,771	
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets		<u>530</u>		<u>1,050</u>	
			<u>95,049</u>		<u>122,785</u>
					<u>16,355</u>
<u>NET PROFIT</u>			<u>28,893</u>		

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

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



## Working in Partnership with:

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The Traveller Law Research Unit,  
Save the Children,  
The Community Law Partnership,  
The National Association of Gypsy Women,  
The Gypsy Council for Education, Culture,  
Welfare and Civil Rights,  
The Advisory Council for the Education of  
Romanies and other Travellers,  
The London Gypsy and Traveller Unit,  
The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain  
The Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group,  
The Children's Society,  
The New Futures Association, Groundswell,  
The Traveller's School Charity,  
The Big Issue.

as well as...

National regional and local government, the  
police, health professionals, the Church,  
landowners, the media and other voluntary and  
statutory organisations.

## With many thanks to our funders:

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Big Lottery Fund  
Comic Relief  
East Sussex County Council  
The Local Network Fund  
The Commission for Racial Equality,  
The Allen Lane Foundation  
The Travellers Aid Trust  
The Tudor Trust  
The Stone Ashdown Trust  
The Churches Commission for Racial Justice  
The Charities Aid Trust  
The Department of Health  
The Scarman Trust  
2 Garden Court Chambers  
1 Pump Court Chambers

