
Traveller children witnessing domestic violence - Multi agency challenges to providing support

Workshop

Conference Report

30th September 2009
Waterfoot Hotel, L'Derry

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Introduction

The following report is drawn from the “Traveller children witnessing domestic violence – multi agency challenges to providing support” workshop held 30th September 2009, Waterfoot Hotel, L’Derry.

The event was organised by NSPCC NI Local Campaigning in partnership with the Western Education & Library Board Traveller Education Department. Funding support for the workshop was made available by the Northern Ireland Policing Board Human Rights & Professional Standards Committee and the Community Engagement Committee and many thanks is given for this support.

Last year the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee completed a thematic inquiry examining the way in which the PSNI deal with the issue of domestic abuse. A report of the inquiry was published in March 2009 and the issue continues to be a matter of ongoing interest to Members. The Committee is currently undertaking a thematic inquiry into policing with children and young people from a human rights perspective and hopes that this conference report will help inform that ongoing work. Given the obvious linkages between the work being undertaken by the NSPCC and the Committee’s completed work and its ongoing thematic inquiry, the Committee were happy to provide funding to support the workshop.

We would also like to acknowledge the significant role of the following Traveller support agencies, for their contribution to the development and successful delivery of the workshop:

Derry Traveller Support Group

Donegal Travellers Project

Pavee Point Project Dublin

Background to development of the Traveller children witnessing domestic violence workshop

The NSPCC with partner agencies ran a multi-agency Foyle domestic violence (DV) campaign with the aim of highlighting the impact of witnessing DV on children and young people, November 08. Materials were developed to support professionals to engage with non abusing parents on this issue and gave advice on how parents might deal with this. From the campaign events requests for specific additional work on the issue came to the NSPCC via health and educational professionals, including those working with Traveller families. It was felt after initial discussions between the Local Campaigning Co-ordinator (LCC) both internally NSPCC and with external partners, in particular the WELB Traveller Teacher department, that a focus on the additional challenges that arise from supporting children witnessing domestic violence in the Traveller community would necessitate a piece of awareness raising work on its own. To this end the LCC and external partners met and drew up a workshop proposal as an appropriate response.

It was intended that the workshop would provide a focus for and gather information from key stakeholders from the statutory and voluntary sectors as well as Traveller community representation. It was proposed that by holding this event and capturing the discussion and the sharing of information this workshop report would be written up to help inform developments on this issue. The Traveller community have identified good practice for working on the issue of domestic violence and this would be an opportunity to hear from representatives from the Traveller community and initiate work in this area. The need for this event was also evidenced by a number of research reports on the issues of domestic violence and/or the Traveller community, which indicated both interagency working across sectors and Traveller community involvement as key to developing good practice responses to providing services.

Meetings took place with Traveller support groups in the Derry and Donegal areas to discuss the potential usefulness of the workshop and the Pavee Point Project, Dublin was contacted to help inform the development from a national perspective. Pavee Point had already developed Violence Against Women (VAW) work within a Traveller context and is cited in the UK as one of the leading groups working on this issue. They agreed as did the other Traveller support projects to become involved in the project, as was essential for its success.

Media involvement

Given the sensitive nature of the workshop it was agreed to minimise external publicity so as to give space for all participants to take part freely and fully.

Key agency involvement

The following are the key local agencies that were involved in consultation for the event – NSPCC Domestic Abuse & Recovery Support Service, WELB Traveller Support Teachers, Derry Traveller Support Group, PSNI Domestic Abuse Unit Foyle, Donegal Traveller Support Group, Toybox Early Years, Foyle Women’s Aid, Western Health & Social Care Trust (WHSCT) Health Visiting, Derry Well Woman and partners cross border, Donegal Women’s Donegal Violence Service.

Research

When researching for the event the NSPCC Local Campaigns Co-ordinator found a dearth of similar events with the first national UK conference for Traveller women experiencing domestic violence only held in May 2009. A small workshop on Traveller domestic violence and child protection had been held in Scotland 2005 but otherwise little activity had occurred on this issue.

Workshop audience

The workshop was publicised through local contacts to agencies working either with the Traveller community or providing services to children. The workshop was booked out in advance of the event, indicating the interest in the area. A list of agencies represented at the day are in Appendix 3. It is recognised that given the time limit planning the event that a more inclusive approach could be developed in subsequent activities. However all key agencies were consulted with and agreement sought to support the workshops aims and objectives.

Information on the Traveller community and domestic violence

Since the workshop was planned significant research became available on the issue in the UK with "Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities: A review" by Cemlyn, Greenfields, Burnett, Matthews & Whitwell. This report has a dedicated chapter on domestic violence as well as Traveller experiences of social work departments.

In addition a report from the first national conference "Supporting Gypsies & Travellers living with Domestic Violence" held 8 May 2009, Holloway Resource Centre, London is available online, with key learning outcomes identified. At this conference a leaflet "Supporting Gypsies and Travellers living with Domestic Violence" was launched, available on the Friends Families and Travellers website. Another recent conference held October 2009 "London Irish Travelling Women and Domestic Violence – Meeting Needs and Challenging Prejudices" shows increased focus on the issue.

As may be seen, the above named conferences mainly focus on women experiencing domestic violence, as opposed to the focus on children witnessing domestic violence workshop that took place in Foyle September 2009. It must be acknowledged that the two are critically inter-related when dealing with domestic violence.

Aims & Objectives of Workshop

Aim

The aim of the event is to explore and identify the issues facing both agencies and the Traveller Community when concerns of the impact of witnessing domestic violence by Traveller children arise.

Objectives

In furtherance of this aim the following objectives will be addressed.

1. To bring together key agency and community representatives who work with the Traveller community in relation to children and domestic violence issues.
2. To identify common problems and themes that emerges from practice when agencies respond to the needs of the Traveller community in relation to domestic violence and in particular in supporting the children and young people.
3. To hear views/experiences from the Traveller Community of how agencies dealing with domestic violence engage with them and in particular when supporting victims and their children.
4. To identify the myths and assumptions that are held about the Traveller Community and their experience of domestic violence.
5. To identify potential solutions to enhance the relationship between agencies representing the Traveller Community and statutory agencies when domestic violence and child welfare are of concern.
6. To organise a workshop addressing the issues above; furthermore providing a written report with recommendations with the aim of acting as a catalyst for development of work in this area.

Workshop Running Order

Traveller children witnessing domestic violence - multi agency challenges to providing support

Wednesday 30 September, Waterfoot Hotel, L'Derry

- 9.30am Tea/coffee
- 10.00am Welcome address – Chair Phil Mahon
- 10.15am Challenges from an agency perspective – PSNI Domestic Abuse unit
and NSPCC Domestic Abuse team
- 10.30am Traveller community experiences/challenges – Pavee Point Project,
Dublin
- 10.50am **Break** followed by poem “She’s Going Back” by Mary McKenna
Donegal Women’s Domestic Violence Service
- 11.00am Local Traveller support overview - Derry Traveller Support
Group and Donegal Traveller Project
- 11.25am Workshops – each table to consider a set of questions and responses
to the day
- 12.15pm Lunch**
- 1.00pm Responses to workshop questions continued
- 2.00pm Plenary feedback to workshop questions
- 2.30 pm Event close**



Presentations

The following presentations were made at the workshop

Challenges from an agency perspective

- (1) Foyle PSNI Domestic Abuse Unit - Sergeant Richard Clarke
- (2) NSPCC Domestic Abuse recovery and support service - Joan Hughes

Traveller community experiences/challenges

- (1) Pavee Point project, Dublin - Caroline Mullen & Tessa Collins

Local Traveller support overview North West Ireland

- (1) Derry Traveller Support Group – Margaret Boyle (no PP available)
- (2) Donegal Traveller Project - Ann Friel & Paula Leonard

Poem

“She’s Going Back” by Mary McKenna Donegal Women’s Domestic Violence Service (poem written about a young Traveller boy)

Copies of the presentations where available are included in Appendix 1

Round Table Discussion

115 participants from throughout Northern Ireland, Dublin and Donegal attended the workshop and fourteen tables were used for the round table discussions. A Chair and Scribe had been briefed prior to the workshop and guided participants through their notes for the workshop and the questions to be covered. Summary of feedback to these questions following:

Question 1

In what way does the issue of Traveller children witnessing domestic violence affect your agency's work (including your role)?

<p>Generic Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence is hidden • Shame in needing help/ stigma • Site visits can be volatile for some agencies • Some workers feel violence is in some way more accepted to sort out disputes etc • Some staff feel unable to discuss with parents about problems • Parents may not allow access to the support worker • Professionals fear backlash from community if issue is addressed specifically • Duty of workers to contact social services • Lack of training for agency staff and others • Difficulty in building relationship with children/ families/parent • Children won't discuss with "strangers" in helping organisations • Make an assumption re treating everyone equally doesn't mean treating everyone the same • Lack of experience across the board, education, support, learning, not just there, need culturally appropriate services, materials • Lack of practice sharing • Major cultural differences, lack of training re cultural issues • Difficult to put preventative measures into place 	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DV problems show as physical and mental health issues • DV victims from Traveller community not using health services • Victims wait for crisis to happen i.e. A&E, dental, hospital • Accessing their home to see demeanour of the children can be difficult • Impact on under 4's slower development and their social skills • Poor uptake of preventative health services due to fear, mistrust and literacy issues, all affects parenting ability <p>Domestic Violence services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuge and prejudices of other women staying there • No continuity of service i.e. refuge Traveller families not staying long enough <p>Police</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotyping of policing
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<p>Traveller</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of own community • Where do Traveller families go? • Mistrust of settled community • Safety – problem of visiting member of Traveller community others will know who is being visited • Agencies working with Traveller community are sometimes asked for advice about areas not covered by them because generic services are unavailable, inappropriate or there is a lack of trust in them • Nomadic pattern of some families makes developing rapport and trusting relationship difficult – progress is undone due to moves. Services designed to cater for sedentary population and do not adequately consider the needs of nomadic Travellers • Traveller lack of knowledge and what is available to them • Role of males in Traveller community different, need to understand Traveller culture norms • Prejudice and hierarchy within Traveller community • Transgenerational messages of being different and isolated 	<p>Social Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of involving social services (that they might lose children)/ perpetrator may threaten victim with social services, victims feel further victimised, difficult to develop positive working relationship with the victim due to this • Different thresholds used for Traveller families by social services and even by the court • Children left longer in situations where risks are high due to stereotyping notions • Case conferences and case reviews lack of appropriate supports in place to enable Travellers to engage with the case conferencing process • Social services rely on info from schools, health visitors etc – referral process can be slow • Traveller children in care difficult adapting to boundaries • Residential settings and adopting need links with other agencies <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes aggressive behaviour of children witnessing DV in schools • Effects on individual Traveller child witnessing DV some withdraw, low self esteem others become disruptive, affects performance • Children coming to school tired with suppressed emotions, poor attendance • School seen as a hassle with so much going on at home if DV happening • Mistrust towards EWO staff on home visits and withholding information • Negative impact on child's inclusion and participation in education activities
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Question 2

In your experience what have been the main difficulties in providing a service/ or accessing a service for children/families you are supporting?

Statutory/support agency issues	Travellers issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust and acceptance of what is provided – tight knit community, lack of trust in statutory agencies• Correct details, names and dates of birth• Lack of literacy• School – female teachers have some issues from older male pupils 9 – 10 year olds may not co-operate with female teachers• Need for therapy for Traveller children witnessing domestic violence• Sometimes will not tell police their correct name and date of birth• We are not culturally aware of the Traveller community• Access of information and understanding• Sometimes we assume they know• Lack continuity in education, friendships and relationships with staff• Low rate of referral to services• Families do not want to co-operate with service, engage or discuss issues• Frequent change of address children get lost in the system – system not effective at monitoring nomadic families• Not enough research on the issue – clear need for statistics of DV in this community, good analysis• Resistant to talk to police, follow up contact needed re process and courts• Lack of comprehensive information for the users of the services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolation of victims that seek help from Travelling community• Ostracising of people – pressure within groups• Ethos of one Traveller family very different to the next• Negativity by media causes problems for other travellers• Travellers can be tarred by same brush• Transport, financial problems• Days of the week and appointments can be difficult for them• Leaflets no good and pen and paper a put off - literacy• Impact of history and stereotyping• People fear difference and don't understand• Prejudice of agencies• Lack of research detailing specific issues – difficult to tailor service to meet specific need if don't know the need• If women leave widespread misconception of “Travelling women don't leave” more probing from agencies as to why they have left i.e. is it just for benefits, fraud, proceedings by agencies more probing• Word of mouth, need to work with whole community not just individuals• Lack of after hours service• Difficult to debunk myths• Fear of racism real or imagined• Little evidence to show positive outcomes for previous Travellers users of the service

Statutory/support agency issues

- Establishing and building a meaningful relationship
- Difficulty of getting Traveller men involved
- May have had a negative experience of school
- Living space difficult to find private space to talk
- Extended family often accompanying women to health centre etc
- Lack of comprehensive list with contact numbers of people within agencies who work with Travellers
- Not enough agencies have a designated person to work with Travellers
- Cultural diversity training required
- Lack of information for professionals and service users
- How do you plan re services/ funding if no statistics?
- Getting in the door to begin with, once familiar with service, gain trust and build relationship with main care giver
- Minimising of what happens and acceptance leads to non engagement with services
- Difficulty in accessing Travelling families and their difficulty in accessing our services
- Women in DV situations know their own situations best and may be safer for her and children to stay

Travellers issues

- Fear for safety if use service – FEAR!
- Depends on people offering service what is their knowledge of Travellers
- Language used to describe service too complicated
- Reactions of others settled community when Travellers use the service
- Experience of discrimination in past influences openness and accepting/seeking support
- Access to a good legal service non existent – rights need to be reinforced
- Treating equally so the same outcome for every child
- Staff turnover extremely high in social services familiarity difficult – get to know one case worker and then they move on
- Traveller families can be put in residential area where they know no-one
- Independent role models
- Lack of partnership working with Traveller inclusion
- Lack of suitable refuge space
- Barriers to leaving legal, emotional and cultural
- Loss of identity if leaves
- If stays fear she will be seen as bad mother and lose children
- Agencies see themselves as “helping” without taking responsibility for being part of the problem for Travellers in the first place by silently allowing them to be treated as 2nd class citizens

Question 3

What, in your view, do Traveller children who witness domestic violence need in terms of support?

General Support	Culturally appropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Someone they can trust• Develop long term trust• Support of their own community• Consistent contact with dedicated personnel• Reassurance to know it is not their fault• Confidence building work• Reinforce that safety is available when required• Ensure support is accessible and sufficient• Change of approach to support• Challenge for children to leave their own community going into care and then when they leave care they have been in a settled community need more support then - After care provision and reintegration• Listening ear someone to talk to – emotional space to share worries – need to feel listened to, peer support and buddying also• Need a supportive mother• Men’s work• Holistic work• Positive action – not words !!!• Someone to talk to, share experiences• Get support for their mum• Girls 14/15 need support• Non judgemental provision of services• Provision of more services i.e. respite care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunity to break pattern of DV – positive role model from within their own culture• Support services need to be aware of specific issues that affect Travelling children, need to be culturally aware• Promote positive images/ resources for Traveller children on the issue• Traveller community as foster carers• Children need more comfortable surroundings for them in relation to culture when they are talking or working with external agencies i.e. traveller communities crèche – young women’s group or after school club• Use above venues for contact with parents and agencies if safe• Independent support workers from within the Traveller community• All services to have cultural awareness• Break barriers and look at reasons why they do what they do• Other Travellers as mentors• Identify supports that fit with Traveller culture• Travellers having a voice – being supported to use this voice

Education / training

- Education to know that this is not an acceptable way of life – with non abusing male positive role models –educating at a young age re this
- Be aware of appropriate and non appropriate behaviour – healthy relationships
- Safety – safety planning
- Ensure workers are skilled and can work at child’s level
- Females need to be empowered not to accept DV
- Same as any other child!
- Extra support for children re homework
- Greater multi agency communication re children who attend short term in schools
- Traveller children can feel ostracised, bullied and lack of belonging when they begin secondary education
- Therapeutic work in schools, counselling services, 1-1 support
- Ensure they know who to go to see – what teacher
- Resource pack, cartoon on TV, VOYPIC,
- Apply training within the workplace, programmes etc
- Skills to protect themselves
- Education on human rights and children’s rights – knowing rights and respecting differences

Health

- Need focus on health and behaviour issues
- Health visitor specific to all Travellers seeking health care – suggestion of similar approach for social work, EWO’s, - a worker that understands Traveller culture – continuity of one person/one unit
- More resources specialised

Inclusion

- Traveller projects to ensure Travellers members are actually involved from start to finish
- We always appear to do things to them as opposed to with them
- Parental involvement workshops, plays etc

Processes/strategy

- All work related processes/ legislation to be kept under review and updated as appropriate
- Short and long term effects of DV addressing these
- Research on issue

Question 4

How might interagency relationships be improved to enhance working on the ground?

Cultural appropriateness/inclusion	Communication/information sharing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travellers community representatives need to be involved in developing service planning, policy material, training• Awareness raising of “Travellers” by Travellers• Traveller women need to be involved in decision making• Understanding of Traveller culture – based on freedom, family, elderly, loyalty, disabled• Various representatives from the Traveller groups – in locations they are comfortable in• Respecting that these communities are capable of letting us know what their needs are	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a framework for networking and sharing info• Better understanding of other agencies roles• Open communication between agencies – but also information protection• Travellers need to understand the law in relation to domestic violence• Communication breakdown therefore workshops like this should be more frequent to build awareness• More networking opportunities – contacts subsequent to networking

<p>Multi & single agency responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency of approach- all statutory agencies involved i.e. key workers – same problems always seem to come back to Traveller groups • Multi agency approach • Long term staff (trust) • Voluntary agencies need to be involved equally – they are hands on • Don't duplicate work • Review of policies and procedures • More focus on child regardless of the fact they are Travellers and his/her rights respected, educated and protected • Dedicated workers within agencies • If Travellers not accessing generic services need to critically examine what the barriers are and what changes need to be made in that way that the service is delivered • Protection and safety sensitively looked at • Multi agency approach to case conferences • Service user feedback 	<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate a shared approach to how best to work with the Traveller community • Shared objectives • Strategy to be outlined for multi agency approach • Consistency of involvement for group working on strategy not always chaired by statutory agencies • Cross border co-operation for jurisdiction issues • Recognition that this process is ongoing and not temporary one off • Cannot concentrate on “crisis” - work must develop other interventions
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHE appropriate housing for Travellers • Travellers educated reference resources available • Seek and allocate appropriate resources to work in partnership with Traveller communities • One stop shop for Travellers – however risk of creating a segregated service would need to be addressed • Making generic services more accessible for Traveller community, eg Primary Health Care model in Rol 	<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No 'tick box' training • Education and awareness training – multi agency training • Change attitude in many organisations re diversity • Interagency training with focus on domestic violence and Traveller lead

Question 5

What support/training might you need to enhance your own skills in relation to this issue? Have you had any Traveller awareness raising training in particular?

<p>Traveller/cultural awareness Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traveller culture awareness training requested• Diversity training requested• None of us have training (at specific table)• All and any training acceptable – no training to date• Training has to be throughout the board• PSNI training college could include training from Traveller community to make them more culturally aware• Training on tradition, traits, issues, views on lifestyle/values• Joint training on child protection and the Travelling community – co-practice – co-working• Early years groups do receive training• Training to ensure anti oppressive practice not present	<p>Inclusion/participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traveller community to identify their needs and what would be most beneficial support systems to them• Input from children and young people in terms of what they need• Young men’s views – expectations of them• Training needs to be informed by the Traveller community• Feedback from children and young people especially 12 – 14 yr old males who may not be able to use refuge re what works for them and seek their views <p>Protocol/procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education board training on child protection and protocol and procedures set up to deal with domestic violence• Organisations working with communities to have knowledge of what statutory responsibilities, powers and policies are and to relay on to Travelling community• Cross border working
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<p>Information/communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further networking opportunities • Lack of knowledge of what is out there on this issue • This forum allows us to realise that potentially the knowledge is in the room and we need to use it • Receive talks/information sessions from groups who work with Travellers or Travellers themselves • Research from other organisations/internet to be made available to staff • Broaden all our experiences <p>Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging media reports 	<p>Other training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on intervention from crisis to long term • Up to date domestic violence training • Training on what services available • Issue specific training and practical advice • Starting point today – lots more training and awareness for both Travellers and service providers <p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical tools for practitioners to assist when working with Traveller children • More co-ordination of services • Pavee Point develop Traveller resources on this issue • Funding for training needed
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Question 6

What are your suggestions for developing future work in this area?

<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible sub groups • Move to action rather than words • Not as important = ACCESS – More important = OUTCOMES • Quality of outcomes for Travellers measured • Cross border co-operation 	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits to other projects • Dedicated contact points within other agencies • Update our knowledge regularly • Q&A sessions – feedback to agencies on good and bad practice
<p>Services/ resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal services and rights for these • Money! – special teams to deal with Travellers who will give consistency need funding • Amalgamation of service – out reach services “one stop shop” positioned to increase ease of access for Travellers if appropriate • Continue funding for good work already being done! • Take the service to the client • Engage statutory sector i.e. mental health, GP’s, child protection, school principals, involve refuge/crisis intervention services and DV providers • Art therapy/role play 	<p>Culturally appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insight into the culture and expectations of a Traveller woman as a wife/mother/Traveller – greater interface with Traveller community • Facilities close to Traveller communities to signpost and advise on multiple issues • Greater interface with representatives and individuals from Traveller community and groups • Engagement • Need to challenge if some agencies don’t place Traveller children on an equal level to settled children • Neutral sites for meetings • Education facilities more Traveller friendly • Tessa/Ann (Traveller women who presented) need to hear more from Traveller women and we need to know how to work together and act upon this information

Training/ education

- Localised training
- Setting up of a forum/group delivering training to local agencies
- Education programmes for children and healthy relationships
- Socials Services Department more training on Traveller communities
- Workshops for young men and women re relationship awareness
- Generic education programmes for children and young people

DV appropriate

Discussion of highlighted risk ensured

Plenary Session overview

All chairpersons fed back on a specific question to give a sense of the variety of discussion themes and experiences in the room.

At the end of this feedback the Chair Ms Phil Mahon gave a concluding overview of the key issues she felt had been presented in the room during the course of the day.

Ms Mahon highlighted the calls for better communication between agencies providing services to the Traveller community and in particular regarding Traveller children in need of support. She also highlighted the potential for enhancing these relationships on the ground and training opportunities identified Ms Mahon concluded by thanking all those that had presented at the event and also those that had attended for their attention to the workshop questions and the quality of the feedback given. She informed those attending that recommendations from the day would be circulated when completed to all those in attendance and looked forward to this.

Workshop Recommendations

Following are the key themes to come out from the workshop from participants. It is recognised that whilst some recommendations are domestic violence specific others may relate to other more general Traveller community issues as well as Traveller children safeguarding themes:

Research

1. Research on the issue of Traveller children/families experiencing domestic violence in Northern Ireland carried out as gap has been identified
2. A baseline of information gathered with and from the Traveller community to inform service development on this issue

Engagement/inclusion

1. Traveller involvement in all processes and developments in this area in a meaningful and equal way.
2. Traveller views/experiences of the services currently offered sought - and for this consultation process to become an ongoing process when developing new services/policies.
3. Facilities/services delivered in venues close to and comfortable for the Traveller community to use, neutral venues. Risks may be considered.
4. Greater interface with representatives and individuals from Traveller community and groups wherever possible.
5. Review agency's experiences of delivering services to Traveller community and vice versa.
6. Positive role models male and female from the Traveller community to support this work identified.
7. Ensuring of equality of service for Traveller children and families experiencing domestic violence.

Strategy

1. A strategy to deliver better outcomes for Traveller women and children experiencing domestic violence developed and agency commitment to this.
2. An overarching multi agency strategy is developed to address all the safeguarding needs of Traveller children in Northern Ireland – not just DV specific.
3. Clear measurement of service outcomes for the Traveller community in relation to service delivery and the quality of these.
4. Develop opportunities within existing fora to take forward recommendations and keep momentum from the workshop.
5. Clarity of links between existing domestic violence fora and Traveller forums – review existing groups and develop/amend to fit new strategy on this issue.

Multi agency work

1. Clarity on agencies roles and clear pathways for information sharing and multi agency working on the issue of domestic violence and other safeguarding themes, whilst protecting confidentiality
2. Key agencies such as PSNI, Social Services, Education have consistency of approach on the issue and policies, procedures developed appropriate to the Traveller experience with their engagement
3. Dedicated, named, appropriately trained staff to liaise with the Traveller community identified within all agencies to develop more trusting long-term relationships
4. Engage statutory sectors across the board on this issue from primary health care, to LAC, GPs, child protection, schools, police, domestic violence service providers, housing providers etc.

Training and resource development

1. Training across the board on Traveller culture specifically, and more generally on diversity and anti oppressive practice
2. Development of Traveller appropriate resources to deal with the issue of domestic violence.
3. Development of Traveller appropriate education programmes on healthy relationships and keeping safe information for children and young people
4. Development of a programme to engage non abusing parent to raise awareness of the impact of witnessing domestic violence on their children
5. Traveller awareness training pre qualification for all relevant agencies ie PSNI, health etc, to become core training
6. "Traveller" training delivered by Travellers.
7. Information sharing/awareness raising opportunities like this workshop in the future identified and resourced.

Services

1. Identify issues affecting current service delivery of adult and of children's domestic violence services from agency and Traveller user perspectives
2. Traveller appropriate information services available in or near their locality and access to them be developed / informed by Traveller feedback
3. Review existing provision for Traveller children and young people to have a safe place to speak about their experiences or to seek help
4. Development response to address under 4's witnessing domestic violence and in particular support to pregnant Traveller women experiencing domestic violence including Early Years services, midwifery, health visitor support and GP's.
5. Address potential responses to Traveller children witnessing domestic violence requiring appropriate support in schools, health service, community with all key agencies
6. Review potential of Community Health Model support for Traveller community already established in RoI for development and roll out in NI. Given that without a Traveller health infrastructure which enables training, development and employment of Traveller women and men on this and a range of safeguarding and wider health issues, progress will be difficult.

Funding

1. Funding continue for current projects supporting work in this area.
2. Funding from a variety of sources identified to meet needs outlined throughout the workshop recommendations.

Additional issues

1. Development of enhanced cross border co-operation on Traveller issues and in particular child protection issues including domestic violence.
2. Promote positive images of the Traveller community where possible particularly in the media.
3. Evidence of need for opportunities to develop relationships with whole Traveller community not just in relationship to children witnessing domestic violence issue.
4. Best practice and information sharing continue to take place and where appropriate made available to agencies on an accessible website.
5. Review of all Ireland Ethnic Identification process for the Traveller community to enhance information on the needs of Travellers. Training to support staff to use this questionnaire effectively and sensitively (R of Ireland)
6. Consider adopting similar approach to work with other Ethnic Minority groups in Northern Ireland, mindful that each community has their own cultural characteristics and a "one size fits all" approach may not work. Again placing Ethnic Minority needs and voices at the centre of the work.

Summary of Exit Evaluations

Traveller children witnessing domestic violence multi agency challenges to providing support

Date: 30th September, 2009

Venue: Business Centre, Waterfoot Hotel, Derry

Chair: Ms Phil Mahon

Total returned Evaluation Questionnaires: 98

1. How would you evaluate the presentations?

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
	1%	33%	66%

Comments:

To hear from Traveller women and their experience	36
Informative	7
Good presentation	5
More time for Traveller speakers	2
Power-points difficult to read	1
Poem good	1
Meeting people more time	1
Agency challenge connection not made	1
Hard to see, hear	1

2. How would you evaluate the organisation of the workshop element of the event?

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
1%	2%	31%	66%

Comments:

Workshop Time constraints	10
Organised	7
Input from other agencies	6
Positive Experience	4
Too many participants	1
Informative	3
Scribe Problems	1
Professional	1
More Refreshments	1

3. Please identify one learning outcome (or more) that you have gained from the event?

Comments:

Good for Statistic's	1
More Training Wanted	15
Ability to Listen	3
Brought Awareness	40
Informative	5
Outreach work needed	11
Learning from Traveller's	7
Prejudice, Stigma & Myths	11
Awareness of Agencies Available	21
Working in a Team	1
Self Reflection	8
Domestic Abuse Culture	5
Literature for parents	1

4. How would you rate the facilities offered by the venue?

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
2%	5%	32%	61%

Comments:

Nice Venue	4
Too Noisy	6
Relaxing Atmosphere	3
Good Food	5
Parking/Accessibility	4
Limited Food	2
Poor PowerPoint Visibility	3

5. Please let us know any other comments or suggestions for future events/ campaigns that may help us meet your needs.

Comments:

More Agency Involvement	1
More Meetings	11
More Training	11
Positive Feedback	6
Multi-Agency Approach	2
More Traveller Input	8
Bad Time Management	3
Hard to Hear Presentation	1
Q&A at End	2
Poor Catering	1
Agencies Addressing Prejudice	2

6. Agency type attending:

Statutory	=	63
Voluntary	=	26
Community	=	8
Other	=	1

Acknowledgements

In addition to the Northern Ireland Policing Board funding for the event and the support of our partner organisation the WELB Traveller Education Department . We would like to thank the following for their contribution to the development and delivery of the day:

Chair for the day:

Ms Phil Mahon

Contributing agencies:

Derry Traveller Support Group

Donegal Travellers Project

NSPCC DARRS Team

Pavee Point Dublin

PSNI Foyle Domestic Abuse Team

We would also like to thank all of those who acted as workshop table chairs/scribes for the day and who so successfully captured the thoughts and experiences of all those who attended.

Appendix 1

Presentations

Donegal Travellers Project

Donegal Travellers Project is a voluntary non-governmental organisation which is committed to the attainment of human rights for Irish Travellers. The group is a partnership of Travellers and the majority population working together to address the racism and exclusion Travellers experience in society.

It has been involved in direct work with Travellers since 1997.

Primary Health Care Project

- Equality in health for Travellers
- Ten years in existence
- Seven Travellers employed with funding from the Health Service Executive
- Work at a number of different levels, including :
 - grassroots work with Traveller families
 - Partnership work with agencies

Historical records show that Travellers have been both present and unwanted in Irish society since at least the 12th century



Gmelch 1978, Helleiner 1998, McDonagh 1994

■ Deputy O'Donnell, TD, Dail Eireann 1944

‘tramps and gypsies who go round in caravans touring the country... these beggars are a nuisance.. Those tramps on the roads here ... do not seem to bother very much about birth control. I saw three generations of such children; they marry very young and breed like rabbitsThese young boys and girls do not go to school and there is no earthly chance of doing anything with them.



Mary Ellen Synon Jan 26th 1996, Sunday Independent

‘is a life of appetite ungoverned by intellect It is a life worse than the life of beasts, for beasts at least are guided by wholesome instinct. Traveller life is without the ennobling intellect of man or the steadying instinct of animals. This tinker "culture" is without achievement, discipline, reason or intellectual ambition. It is a morass. And one of the surprising things about it is that not every individual bred in this swamp turns out bad. Some individuals among the tinkers find the will not to become evil”.

BREAKING THE SILENCE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST TRAVELLER WOMEN

The report of the Task Force on Violence Against Women (1995) states:

"That the inequalities experienced by women generally are also experienced by Traveller women. In addition, Traveller women suffer discrimination experienced by Travellers as a group in Irish society".

- Traveller Health, A National Strategy 2002-2005:

"While the situation for all women who have to leave their home in search of a violence-free life is difficult, Traveller women experience additional dilemmas which make it more difficult for them to access help and support and explore their options. This is brought about by a combination of discrimination in services and professions (institutional and individual) and a lack of culturally appropriate provision"

The Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) Report, 2002, states:

"In order to achieve more culturally appropriate services (for Traveller women), the provision of training to increase both awareness and skills amongst service providers is needed. This should include awareness-raising regarding racist attitudes."

WORK SO FAR ...

- Awareness raising, education, solidarity
- Donegal Travellers Project has undertaken training in the area of Violence Against Women – two full day's training attended by 18 women who work in the project
- Traveller women involved in campaigns on Violence Against Women – candlelit vigil, coffee mornings, press releases
- Workshops & information sessions delivered by staff in Donegal women's refuge
- Traveller woman participating on the management committee of Donegal Women's Refuge

Continued...

- Leaflet designed on supports and services available to Traveller women experiencing violence
 - Design and delivery of culturally appropriate training to a range of service providers
 - Training delivered to Gardai, social work teams and to staff in Donegal women's refuge
 - Over 400 HSE employees have attended training to date
- The training delivered is based on feminist, anti-racist and human rights principles.

Focus on children

- Youth programme, creche, afterschool service, pre-school
- Up to 100 children and young people supported through these programmes
- Family support sub group established with the Health service to look at supports needed for children where there is a crisis or a child protection issue - focus in on prevention
- All community health workers have completed child protection training with the HSE

- Support for young people, aged 16 upwards who have left home due to violence and become homeless as a result
- Direct support for children from homes where there is domestic violence – places made available in the creche in a small number of cases where there has been a referral by the court or by social work team
- Development work with young Travellers around a range of issues including self esteem, anger management and sexism

Some lessons learned.....

- Single factor or simplified explanations of the nature and extent of violence against Traveller women and children are inaccurate and often ignore the complex and multiple effects of racism, poverty and disadvantage
- Approaches need to be multi – dimensional and must involve Travellers themselves
- Traveller women and children experience violence at the individual level but also often institutional violence, for example, where they are subject to eviction or where there is inequality in the application of child protection legislation
- Challenging myths that violence against Traveller women and children is a cultural norm is an ongoing part of addressing Violence Against women in the Traveller community

Issues for Agency

- NSPCC policy
- Diversity strategy 2005-10
- Objective of strategy
- NSPCC Values
- Principles of Strategy



Issues for the worker

- Personal prejudice
- Knowledge/understanding



Putting it into practice!

- Selecting a worker
- Sessions
- Materials





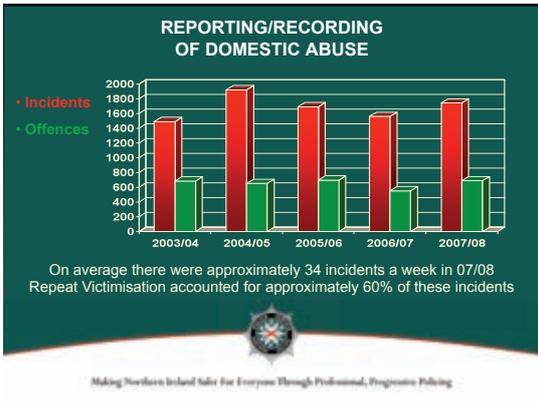
D/Sgt Richard Clarke
Public Protection Unit
Police Service of
Northern Ireland

Making Northern Ireland Safer for Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

REPORTING/RECORDING OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

'Any **incident** of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) by one **family member** against another or adults who are or have been **intimate partners**, regardless of gender.

Making Northern Ireland Safer for Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing



PSNI PRIORITIES

- To protect the lives of both adults and children who are at risk as a result of domestic violence;
- To investigate all reports of domestic violence;
- To facilitate effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable;
- To adopt a proactive multi-agency approach in preventing and reducing domestic violence. (i.e. Liaising with other agencies such as FWA/SS etc)

Making Northern Ireland Safer for Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURE

- DAO'S Investigate Serious Domestic Incidents only.
- Record Statement from Victim.
- Record Statement from Witnesses.
- Secure and preserve evidence, (ie Scene/CCTV).
- Arrange other agencies, (CSI/Photography).
- Arrest/Interview Offender.
- Charge/Report Offender.
- Prepare report for PPS – They decide if case goes to Court.
- If case goes to Court – Trial, (Special Measures + FWA Support Worker) – Conviction – Sentence.
- DAO's provide follow up to ALL VICTIMS OF DA and provide report history to Other agencies, i.e. SS/PPS.

Making Northern Ireland Safer for Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

NMO/OCC ORDERS

- Court Order – Obtained by Victim.
- Victim contacts Solicitor – Solicitor records reasons why one is required.
- Solicitor attends Court and Court grants. The Order can make stipulations, (workplace etc).
- Order is passed to Police for Service on Respondent.
- If Order breached – Police Arrest/Charge.
- Occupation Orders – Exclusion from Home.

Making Northern Ireland Safer for Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

Traveller community experiences of using/interfacing with agencies on issues of Domestic Violence.

30th September '09

Caroline Mullen
Tessa Collins
Pavee Point Travellers' Centre




Introduction

- Context of our work
- Barriers
- What works well for us
- Challenges

Pavee Point Travellers Centre

Non-governmental organisation committed to the attainment of human rights for Irish Travellers, for the last 25 years. We are Travellers and members of the majority population working together in partnership to address the needs of Travellers, as a minority group experiencing exclusion and marginalisation.

Aim of Pavee Point

- To contribute to improvement in the quality of life and living circumstances of Irish Travellers, through working for social justice, solidarity, socio-economic development and human rights.

Programmes include:

- Health
- CDP
- Education/Early years
- VAW
- Mediation
- Youth work
- Information
- Drugs Specific Initiative

Travellers - Ethnic Group

- An involuntary group (i.e. one is born into it) that sees itself and is seen by others as different. Members share a common ancestry, culture, history, traditions and sense of belonging or peoplehood.

Travellers - Ethnic Group

- “[In Ireland] the single most discriminated against ethnic group is the Travelling People.”
European Parliament Committee on Racism and Xenophobia 1991
- A UK court ruled in August 2000 Irish Travellers are an ethnic group.
- Ireland still does not recognise Irish Travellers as MEG.

Peace Point Travellers Centre

Irish Population 2006



Population and Distribution

- 22,435 Travellers
- 62% under 25, 42% under 15
- 2.6% over 65
- Only 25 Travellers over 85 years

Source: Census 2006

Objectives of VAW Programme

- To empower Traveller women to develop an analysis of the dynamics of VAW.
- To create a framework for networking and sharing analysis on the issues of VAW in the Traveller community.
- To develop policy material for the resourcing of local Traveller groups and service providers.
- To develop training materials for use with local Traveller groups and service providers.
- To challenge Traveller men on the issues of VAW in the Traveller community.
- To explore and document Traveller women's collective experience of VAW.
- To create a context for a more diverse policy agenda for the development and implementation of VAW initiatives that are inclusive of Traveller women.

Policy Context

- “The inequalities experienced by women generally are also experienced by Traveller women. In addition, Traveller women suffer from discrimination experienced by Travellers as a group in Irish society.”
- The Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community 1995.

Policy

- “While the situation for all women who have to leave their home in search of a violence-free life is difficult, Traveller women experience additional dilemmas which make it more difficult for them to access help and support and explore their options. This is brought about by a combination of discrimination in services and professions (institutional and individual) and a lack of culturally appropriate provision.”

Traveller Health a National Strategy 2002-2005

Policy

- "In order to achieve more culturally appropriate services (for Traveller women), the provision of training to increase both awareness and skills amongst service providers is needed. This should include awareness raising regarding racist attitudes". The Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) Report 2002

Interculturalism and Anti-racism

- "A service that challenges racism at the individual and institutional level will ensure that Travellers have a visibility within planning and provision. Providers will be sensitive to issues of discrimination and their impact and to the potential for their service to discriminate. Provision will be rooted in an affirmation of Traveller identity and will seek to contribute to improving the wider context within which Travellers live"

Fig 9 Traveller Proofing -Within an Equality Framework/Traveller Proofing Health; Bejgal Quirke Paper Point Publications 2002.

Equality Steps to raise awareness of equal outcomes for Travellers

- Equality proof all decisions to ensure they address rather than aggravate racism.
- Track take up and outcomes for MEG through collection of data and adapt services based on this info to improve outcomes for these groups.
- Put mechanism in place to consult and work in partnership with groups and rep orgs to remove barriers and improve service.
- Seek and allocate the necessary resources.

Culturally Appropriate Services

CA services are designed to minimise exclusion, support identity, promote respect and inclusive practice:

- Using Traveller images, toys (affirming esp crisis accommodation, school)
- Understanding of Traveller culture
- CA service development collaboration with Traveller women and orgs.
- Support services respect and reflect cultural difference in design and delivery of services.

Some of what we do know for Traveller women and children

- Discrimination and racism is a daily experience
- Difficulty for Traveller women to disclose VAW
- "Overrepresented in refuges" Not feeling welcome Policy on children- staff/clients
- Intermarriage and close knit families + and -
- Leaving relationship = leaving community
- Barring orders on halting site? Use
- Travellers not all the same -different needs
- Accommodation for Travellers - VAW pressure

Womens Aid Rol 2009 Report

- 10,140 calls answered from 20,326 calls made.
- 71% of answered calls from women seeking direct support.
- 18% hang ups
- 1% hoax
- 97% of callers were women and 3% men.
- 201 minority callers from total of 10,140 calls
- 71% Migrant women.
- 23% Disabled women
- 6% Traveller women

“Challenging the misconceptions of VAW against MEW inc Travellers”

- Violence against women's more prevalent in MEGs and is inherent in their culture.
- Support services and Gardaí are easily accessible for women from MEGs
- Information for women experiencing violence is available to all.
- Many women from MEGs do not challenge or resist violence against women within their communities.

Violence against women's more prevalent in MEGs and is inherent in their culture.

- Key recommendations
- the need to develop culturally appropriate mainstream services which are accessible to MEW.
- Funders of the voluntary sector should provide additional resources to ME and other relevant organisations for the facilitation of MEWs participation in the community

Gender Based Violence of MEW in Ireland 2009 "Translating Pain into Action" WHC

MEDIA
Negative impact

Support services and Gardaí are easily accessible for women from MEGs

- Belief that SWs take children away still exists
- History of mistrust and poor relations between Travellers and police
- Travellers lack confidence in police and the justice system
- Significant levels of dissatisfaction with overall Garda service (48% - Garda Survey 2007)
- Pattern emerges of over policing and under protection of Travellers
- Discrimination and previous bad experience

Information for women experiencing violence is available to all.

- Literacy
- Not culturally appropriate so do not feel it is for them
- Difficult legal system
- No access to information as not using services where it might be available.

Many women from MEGs do not challenge or resist violence against women within their communities.

- Do but not in an obvious way

Examples of what works

- Training module VAW For Trav orgs
- Training with service providers
- Representation by Travellers at local regional and national level NSC, CPA, WHRA, NWCI and feed into international level CEDAW and IOVAW
- Traveller Counselling Service - CA
- Fostering /shared rearing service - CA
- Youth and VAW working together new project
- Mediation service Local Garda clinics + results

New Youth Project

Project aims

Aims:

- to develop a culturally appropriate training module for professionals (youth workers and primary health care teams) to deliver sexual and relationship education to Traveller young people and parents.
- to deliver a training of trainers to these professionals
- to conduct a piece of research on Traveller attitudes to sexual relationships and sex education.

New Youth Project

- Youth project will not only address the need for culturally appropriate services for Travellers in relation to sex education, but it will also look at issues around domestic violence, gender roles and "what is a healthy relationship".
- We will draw on core programmes expertise in Pavee Point from the Health programme, Youth Programme, Traveller Specific Drugs Initiative, Violence Against Women Programme, Mediation Programme, Roma Programme, and the Information team.

Factors inhibiting VAW response from Traveller orgs

- Traveller orgs are not resourced to do this work ie training, staff, fear, lack of accurate info.
- VAW worker in community difficult role/backlash if something goes wrong
- No Data. No systematic ethnic identifier
- Fear of talking in community /training courses. Trouble for family?
- Lack of CA support from agencies

Challenges 2009

- Change in personnel in services - based on individual relationships not institutional.
- Tick box training done - not implemented
- Unwillingness to discuss the issue within the Traveller community but ...
- Cut backs - non replacement in services
- No funding for training of service providers
- Cuts to Traveller programmes CDPsPHCs

Key Points



- Put mechanisms in place to consult and work in partnership with Travellers and Traveller organisation to remove barriers
- Promote Traveller women's participation in planning development and implementation of VAW policies and practices.
- Acknowledge Traveller women as experts on VAW as it affects their lives
- Integrate equality and diversity training for all staff
- Reflect positive images of culture in your service
- Recognise and plan for diversity
- Develop specialist expertise towards Travellers and MEGs
- Seek and allocate resources for this work

Traveller Children ...



... have a right to live their dreams

Traveller Community experiences and challenges

- Thank you for the opportunity to share our experiences with you.

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• pavee.ie/edenn

• www.decet.org



Appendix 2

Poem

She's Going Back

By Mary McKenna, Donegal Women's Domestic Violence Service

"She's going back" he told me
As I walked down the stairs
He stood with his back against the wall
In his eyes I saw his fear

Just a little boy aged 4
He was old beyond his years
Once more he'd seen his dad abuse his mammy
And the words of hate had assailed his ears

They came into the Refuge
Late at night and terrified
So numbed by what had happened
Neither of them could even cry

She was bruised and shaken
On his little cheek a mark so red
Both of them were so exhausted
They went up straight to bed

The next day she said she'd had enough
As the little boy stood and listened by the door
She wasn't going back again
She wouldn't take it anymore

Her phone it then began to ring
And he begged her to forgive
He never meant to hurt her
Without her he couldn't live

This little boy he listened
As his mum then said it was time to go
Back home where Daddy was waiting
He's so sad we left him all alone

He was too young to understand
The emotional blackmail his dad applied
Or to know the pressure his mum was under
All he knew was to him she lied

His face I still remember
His voice rings in my head
Just three words that showed his hurt and fear
"She's going back" was all he said

(based on the life of a young Traveller boy using refuge services in Donegal)

Appendix 3

List of agencies represented on the day

Action for Children
An Munia Tobar
Barnardos
Belfast Trust Social Work Team
CAMHS WHSCT team
ChildLine
Craigavon Travellers Support Committee
Derry Travellers Support Group
Donegal Travellers Project
Foyle Women's Aid
Independent counsellor
Member of Local Assembly (MLA)
Northern Ireland Policing Board
Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
NSPCC Domestic Abuse Recovery & Support Service NI
NSPCC Policy Team NI
NSPCC Young Witness Team Foyle
Omagh Women's Aid
Pavee Point Dublin
Primate Dixon Primary School
PSNI Domestic Abuse Team G District
Shantallow Surestart
Southern Education & Library Board EWS
St Mary's College Derry
Toybox Early Years
University of Ulster Magee Researcher
WELB Behavioural Support Team
WELB Education Welfare Team
WELB Traveller Teachers
Western Education & Library Board Service Managers
WHSCT Family Group Conferencing Team
WHSCT Family Intervention Team
WHSCT Health Visiting Team
WHSCT LAC Team
WHSCT Social Work Teams

Contact Details

NSPCC

Margaret Gallagher

Local Campaigns Co-ordinator

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Web: www.nspcc.org.uk/getinvolved/campaign/Localcampaigning/Foyle/foylecampaigning_wda57135.html

Derry Traveller Support Group

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Email: derrytravellers@btconnect.com

Donegal Travellers Project

Tel: 00353 74 9129281

Email: travhealth@eircom.net

Pavee Point – Dublin

Tel: 003531 8780255

Email: info@pavee.ie

Web: www.paveepoint.ie

