

from Baroness Whitaker



7 July 2020

The Chairperson
The Social Mobility Commission
By email

Dear Chair

Apprenticeships and Social Mobility-fulfilling potential

We write as the Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, and the Shadow Spokesperson on Education.

We were pleased to read your research report of June 2020 ‘Apprenticeships and Social Mobility-fulfilling potential’. However, we were disappointed to find no mention of apprentices from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds in the report, despite statistics existing on these communities, as evidenced by the responses to the Parliamentary Questions asked on this subject by Baroness Whitaker. The statistics given in the responses to the Parliamentary Questions show that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) participation in apprenticeships are low, and that work needs to be done to increase their take-up.

Gypsies and Travellers are some of the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities in the country and they would benefit enormously from being included in the targets for action in the report. Indeed, there is surely a case for GRT forming an integral part of the work of the Social Mobility Commission, as historically they have not, because their severe disadvantage in every index means their inclusion is much needed. They have the lowest life expectancy, the highest infant mortality rate, the lowest educational attainment, and the lowest level of qualifications of any ethnic group in the UK. Data from the last Census in 2011 show that 60% of GRT had no qualifications, and that GRT are the ethnic groups with the lowest level of economic activity at 47%.

We look forward to hearing from you as to how this can be remedied.

Yours sincerely,

Baroness Janet Whitaker
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