

Lee Rowley MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

By email: 13 February 2023

Re: Inequalities experienced by Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

Dear Minister Rowley and Baroness Scott,

We write in our capacity as Co-chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma. There are a number of matters we wish to discuss and would welcome a meeting.

Traveller Pitch Fund

We were encouraged to see the announcement in March 2022 from the Department, allocating £10 million in funding to support local authorities in building new Traveller sites, refurbish existing Traveller sites and to provide temporary stopping places and facilities for Travellers. Applications to the fund closed in June 2022 and we are keen to know when the outcome of this funding will be published. We are interested to hear about how many new sites the scheme will help to deliver, how many sites will be refurbished and whether any applications for temporary stopping places will be granted. If the fund was oversubscribed, are there plans for an extension of this program?

Education funding

In July 2021 the Government announced the allocation of £1 million in funding for education programmes to improve attainment, exclusion rates and career development specifically for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. This was a welcome announcement given the significant and persistent disparity in educational outcomes between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils and the wider population. We understand that the funding was limited to 150 schools and 600 pupils, and we are keen to see

the outcome and impact of this funding on the pupils it reached. Furthermore, if the funding was successful in improving these outcomes, will there be an extension of the funding to reach a wider pool of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children?

Cross-departmental Strategy

The Women and Equalities Committee completed an inquiry in 2019 on [‘Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities’](#). The inquiry helpfully highlighted some of the stark inequalities experienced by Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities. The Committee concluded:

“Our inquiry has found that, while many inequalities have existed for a long time, there has been a persistent failure by both national and local policy-makers to tackle them in any sustained way.”

In response to the findings of this inquiry, the [Department made a commitment](#) to develop a cross-departmental Strategy to address the inequalities. Since this commitment was announced over three years ago, we have yet to see any progress in the development or publication of a Strategy. We have raised this on a number of occasions, including in [June 2022](#), when a number of our members spoke at the House of Lords debate on the Levelling up, asking about the progress of the development of the Strategy and targets to address the deeply troubling inequalities. The House of the Lords Public Services Committee, the Education Select Committee and the Joint Committee on Human Rights have also commented on the severe disparities in the outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

A comprehensive, published Strategy is fundamental for addressing the inequalities experienced by Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. Can you please provide us with an update on the development of the Strategy.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss these points further.



For Gypsies,
Travellers and
Roma

Yours sincerely

Janet Whitaker Mary K Foy

Baroness Janet Whitaker and Mary Foy MP
Co-chairs, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma

Nick Bourne

Lord Nick Bourne
Honorary President, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma

gypsy-traveller.org/appg All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma

Co-chairs: Mary Foy MP, Baroness Janet Whitaker | Honorary President: Lord Nick Bourne

Friends, Families & Travellers (Charity Number: 1112326) acts as Secretariat to the APPG for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma.

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