

Yvette Cooper MP, Secretary of State for the Home Department
By email only

26 November 2024

Dear Yvette,

Re: Greater Manchester Police treatment of Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller children

We write as Chair and Co-chair of the APPG for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, regarding incidents that took place on Saturday 23 November, involving Greater Manchester Police violently restricting and over-policing Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller young people.

Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller young people arrived in Manchester City Centre to shop at the Christmas Markets and the Arndale Centre. However, they were stopped from entering these shopping areas as the Greater Manchester Police enforced a dispersal notice against them. The young people reported feeling specifically targeted because of their ethnicity.

Video footage shows a group of Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller children being dangerously forced onto a train leaving the city. In one instance, a child was pushed and nearly fell onto the tracks. The footage captures the young people appealing to the police and screaming as they are forced onto the trains, unsure of their destination. Some young people had to be collected by their parents from unfamiliar stations. Footage also depicts a young man being forcibly restrained on the ground and arrested. The actions of Greater Manchester Police put the safety and well-being of these young people at risk.

This incident raises serious questions about the leadership and operations of Greater Manchester Police and how this led to racial-profiling and the violent treatment of Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller children. The targeted over-policing of young people from minority ethnic communities caused huge distress for the young people involved, for their families and across Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities.

We request that the Home Office conduct a full investigation of this incident and issue a statement as soon as possible. Questions remain as to the operational decision-making, the absence of any processes in place to safeguard children who were being forcibly removed, and what steps will be taken to make reparations. The young people, their families and wider communities deserve answers and justice.

We look forward to hearing back from you.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Kelly Foy MP, Chair



Baroness Janet Whitaker, Co-chair