



For Gypsies,  
Travellers and  
Roma

Child Poverty Taskforce  
The Cabinet Office

By email: [ChildPoverty.Secretariat@CabinetOffice.gov.uk](mailto:ChildPoverty.Secretariat@CabinetOffice.gov.uk)

14 January 2025

Dear Child Poverty Taskforce

**Re: Child Poverty Strategy**

We write as Chair and Co-chair of the APPG for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma to welcome the creation of the new Ministerial Child Poverty Taskforce.

We are writing to say that the experiences of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, who are at high risk of experiencing poverty, must not be forgotten in the development and implementation of the Child Poverty Strategy.

Gypsies, Roma, and Irish Travellers experience high levels of economic exclusion and deprivation across a range of social indicators. For instance, of the respondents to the 2021 Census who identified as 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' (aggregated in the Census), only 41.0% were employed/self-employed (compared to the overall population at 70.9%). The most common reasons for economic inactivity among females who identified as 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller', were 'looking after home or family' and 'long-term sick or disabled'. The Census also showed that 56.8% of 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' respondents had no qualifications (compared with 18.2% of the overall population) and were twice as likely to be in a lone-parent household.

Welfare policy reforms have created severe economic hardship for certain groups, especially those with disabilities, and those with larger families and [data from the academic year 2023 to 2024](#) shows that Irish Travellers (64.9%) & 'Gypsies/Roma' (58.3%) (as aggregated by DfE), have the highest rates of Free School Meals out of any ethnic groups in the UK (compared to 24.6% of pupils as a whole).

The fact that Gypsies & Travellers have the lowest educational attainment at all key stages up to, and including, KS4 out of any ethnic groups in the UK, will likely compound economic exclusion and risk of experiencing poverty, for their generation in years to come. [In the 2022 to 2023 school year](#) only 16.2 % of Gypsy/Roma pupils & 30.7% of Irish Travellers achieved a grade 4 or above in GCSE English & Maths, compared with 65.1% of all pupils.

**[gypsy-traveller.org/appg](https://www.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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There are specific issues for Gypsy and Traveller families living on sites, which create and compound poverty. For example, Gypsy and Traveller households usually have to pay rent for the pitch where the mobile home is stationed and on the rental of the mobile home itself, but the housing element of Universal Credit tends not to be sufficient to cover both rents. This has a considerable impact on household finances. Also, the energy access arrangements on many local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites exacerbate fuel poverty for residents.

We urge you to include actions and targets in the Child Poverty Strategy that will reach, and include, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children across the communities. We would be happy to connect you with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller civil society, so you can engage with them as part of the development of this work.

We look forward to hearing back from you.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Kelly Foy MP and Baroness Janet Whitaker Chair and Co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma