



For Gypsies,
Travellers and
Roma

Florence Eshalomi MP,
Minister of State (Homelessness, Democracy, Communities and Faith)
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
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By post and email to: Ministerial.Correspondence@communities.gov.uk /
florence.eshalomi.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Florence,

Re: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

Warm congratulations on your appointment as Minister of State at MHCLG. I write as Co-chair of the APPG for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, to share the [report](#) from the parliamentary event we held in July to launch the [Council of Europe Roma and Traveller Inclusion Strategy](#).

The event brought together parliamentarians, representatives of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, voluntary and community sector organisations, civil servants, local authorities and academics to discuss the Strategy and its relevance to the UK. The attached [report](#) captures the contributions of the speakers, the key points and themes raised during the discussion, and feedback from participants.

The Strategy provides an important framework for strengthening Gypsy, Roma and Traveller inclusion, equality and participation, while addressing the inequalities experienced by these communities. We believe the Strategy provides an opportunity to consider how its objectives can be taken forward in the UK.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people face some of the [starkest inequalities across a range of areas](#), including accommodation, education, health, employment, and access to services. Research also highlights [widespread societal prejudice](#) against the community.

In 2019, MHCLG announced that it would lead [a cross-departmental strategy to tackle entrenched inequality and improve the lives of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#). This Strategy was initiated by the then government but never implemented after the Minister responsible, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, moved on. The UK remains in breach of the Council of Europe mandate.



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The Council of Europe's 2023 review of the UK's compliance with the [Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#) and the [European Commission against Racism and Intolerance](#) both called for a national strategy to address longstanding inequalities experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in the UK.

We trust that the Government will now take steps toward delivering on the national strategy. As Minister for Homelessness, Democracy, Communities and Faith, your role is of course central to ensuring that government policy is responsive to the needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. We would therefore welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the CoE Strategy, the longstanding inequalities experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, and possible next steps for its implementation in the UK.

We look forward to hearing from you and to working with you on these important issues.

Yours sincerely,

Baroness Janet Whitaker, Co-chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma