



# Bullied, Not Believed and Blamed

## The Experiences of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils: Recommendations for Schools and Other Settings

Anti-Bullying Alliance and Friends,  
Families and Travellers, 2020

# CONTENTS

<b>Foreword .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Summary of key findings.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Summary of key recommendations .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Background information .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Focus groups .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Findings .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Recommendations.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Supporting tools and resources .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>About us .....</b>	<b>31</b>



Photo courtesy of Jonathan Syer

## FOREWORD



**Anna Feuchtwang,**  
Chief Executive – National Children's Bureau:

"This report paints a worrying picture of the bullying Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children can experience at school but it also provides an opportunity to act as a catalyst for change. While we have come a long way in preventing and responding to bullying in our schools some children are still being left behind. No child should have to go to school and experience this kind of endemic discrimination. Teachers need support and training so they feel confident to challenge staff and students whenever they hear bullying, demeaning and insulting language being used anywhere in school and this needs to be backed by whole school leadership including policies and procedures and preventive strategies that over time will stop it happening in the first place. NCB is proud to support the Anti-Bullying Alliance and I hope that the recommendations in the report and the resources currently being trialled with Friends, Families and Travellers and the Anti-Bullying Alliance will go a long way to support schools to think critically about their practice to better support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people and ensure they feel safe from bullying and supported to thrive in school."



**Baroness Janet Whitaker,**  
Honorary President of Friends, Families and Travellers:

"For some schools, this report with recommendations and the inclusion of the Anti-Bullying Alliance's Gypsy, Roma and Traveller anti-bullying audit tool will be a conversation starter about the experiences of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in their school. For others, it will provide the tools to turn good practice into excellent practice. Any child in school, regardless of heritage or culture, should feel safe and happy to learn – this is a wonderful opportunity for staff to understand the experiences of students from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and to put appropriate support systems in place."



# INTRODUCTION

This report aims to provide you with information about the experiences of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people and provide you with recommendations about how to prevent and respond to this type of bullying in schools and other settings.

This project, aimed at tackling bullying of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils is being delivered in partnership with Friends, Families and Travellers and is part of a wider programme funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. The main aim of the project is to challenge bullying and ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children feel safer in schools and have cultural affirmation.

Unfortunately the experiences at school of the young people we consulted with were overwhelmingly negative, but they were able to share lots of ideas that schools can put in place to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.



"NOT DEALT WITH IN THE SAME WAY OTHER RACIAL BULLYING IS DEALT WITH. FOR THEM, RACIAL SLURS AGAINST GYPSIES AREN'T DEALT WITH IN THE SAME WAY AS OTHER RACIAL GROUPS. IT'S SEEN AS A BIG DEAL FOR OTHER RACIAL GROUPS BUT NOT FOR US."

**YOUNG PERSON**



There are also many good practice examples from schools who are effectively preventing and responding to bullying and creating inclusive environments for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils to flourish.

At the end of this report, you will find recommendations from the young people and links to other tools, examples and resources to support you to make positive changes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people.



For the purpose of this report, we refer to children and young people as simply 'young people'.

Direct quotes from the young people are used throughout this report. Please be aware that some of the young people we consulted with talked about the racist language they had experienced – whilst we do not wish to reproduce this language, we felt it was important to include their own words. We have provided footnotes which explain the meaning of the terms used, including racist language commonly directed at Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people which we hope will support you to identify and challenge this language.

Whilst a few of the young people we consulted with talked about being bullied by their peers, a significant majority reported to us that the bullying and/or prejudice they had experienced was by **school staff**. Moreover, the proportion of young people in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller focus groups who reported being bullied by staff was **very high** in comparison to other groups of young people that we have previously consulted with.

# SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people we consulted with reported:

- **a lack of understanding and visibility** of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller histories and cultures in school.
- **being negatively labelled**, judged and having presumptions made about them being trouble-makers or not willing to learn.
- **they felt they were treated differently** from other pupils and could not access additional support when they needed it.
- **racist and offensive language** about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and communities was going unchallenged.
- **not being believed** when they report bullying.
- **presumptions about them** having a tendency to bully others.
- **feeling they had to retaliate** or hide that they are Gypsy, Roma or Traveller.
- **they had learned to expect bullying** because no action was being taken to prevent or respond to it.



"SOMETIMES THEY THINK WE'RE ONE BUT YOU'VE GOT ROMANY TRAVELLER, IRISH TRAVELLER, MIXED ENGLISH. THERE'S LIKE LOADS OF DIFFERENT ONES BUT THEY JUST THROW US ALL IN TOGETHER."

YOUNG PERSON

# SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

To better prevent and respond to bullying, the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people we consulted with said schools should:

- **raise awareness of and celebrate** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller ethnicities and cultures and promote positive images of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in school.
- **ensure staff understand** the bullying, prejudice and discrimination Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people experience.
- **challenge racist language.**
- **make teaching more inclusive.**
- **develop good relationships** with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. **take seriously the bullying reported** by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people.

We also recommend joining the [Anti-Bullying Alliance's All Together programme](#) which uses a whole school approach and has evidenced its success in reducing bullying and improving pupil wellbeing. The programme includes new tools and resources to help schools tackle bullying of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils and other groups of pupils who disproportionately experience bullying.



# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

"GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER PEOPLE HAVE THE WORST OUTCOMES OF ANY ETHNIC GROUP ACROSS A HUGE RANGE OF AREAS, INCLUDING EDUCATION, HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND HATE CRIME."

**THE WOMEN AND EQUALITIES COMMITTEE,  
HOUSE OF COMMONS, 2019**

Negative attitudes towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and stereotyping are common. In 2018, the Equality and Human Rights Commission found that out of 1,903 adults in Britain, over 40% expressed 'very negative' attitudes towards these three communities, which was by far the most of any protected characteristic group in the study.

The level of discrimination reported by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people is also very high. In 2017, The Traveller Movement found that 70% (138 out of 199 interviewed) of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people had experienced discrimination in some form in education.

Furthermore, in a survey conducted by Friends, Families and Travellers in 2019, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people were asked what the biggest challenge in school they faced was; 86% of pupils reported the biggest challenge at school being bullying, followed by racism at 73%.

Previous studies have also found that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people experienced racial abuse (86%), had been bullied or physically attacked (63%)<sup>1</sup> and had been picked on because they were Gypsy or Traveller<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>[The Children's Society \(2007\) 'This is Who We Are'](#)

<sup>2</sup>[Save The Children \(2005\) 'Having Our Say'](#)

A parent who submitted evidence as part of the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry (2019) stated:

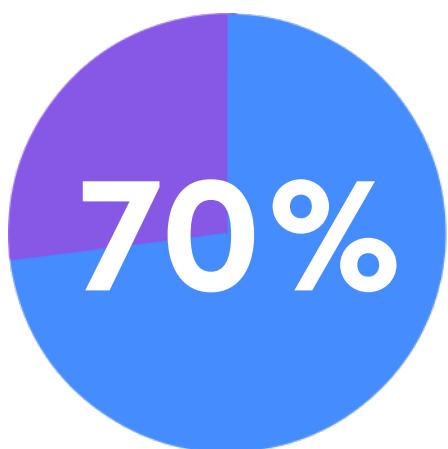
**"My daughter has been called names at her secondary school because it's known she is a Gypsy. Horrible names. I want her to stay there but it is hard. Teachers don't take it seriously enough. They might say to the child to apologise but that's not enough. Any other racism in the school is taken up higher."**

Moreover, according to the Government's Race Disparity Audit (2018), Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils have the lowest attainment of all ethnic groups, were most likely to

be absent from school, and were the most likely to be excluded.

Whilst there is a need for further research in this area, the concerning findings from our own focus groups draw parallels with findings from other studies. This demonstrates an urgent need to address the bullying, discrimination and prejudice faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

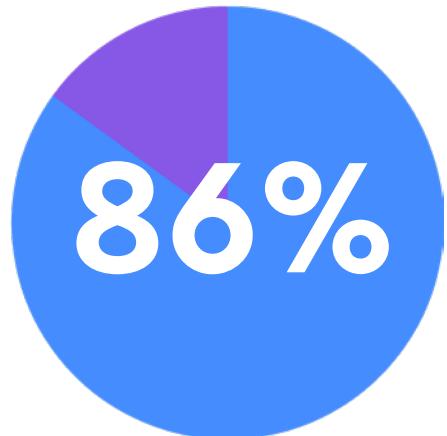
At the Anti-Bullying Alliance we are deeply concerned about the level and types of bullying being experienced and reported by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. These are issues that we simply cannot ignore.



**70%** (138 out of 199 interviewed) of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people had experienced discrimination in some form in education.

**(The Traveller Movement, 2017)**

**86%** of pupils reported the biggest challenge at school being bullying  
**(Friends, Families and Travellers, 2019)**



# FOCUS GROUPS

In February 2020, we conducted focus groups with 26 young people aged between 5–18. 24 of the participants were Gypsy, Roma or Traveller and two were settled (non-Traveller). The young people were either in primary or secondary school, or were educated at home. Several of the young people who were educated at home related this to poor experiences in schools.

The first of the focus groups was held in Steyning, West Sussex with twelve young people, aged 11–18. Ten of the participants were Romany Gypsy. To provide a range of perspectives, two settled (non-Traveller) young people also took part.

WE FOUND THE FEEDBACK FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT BULLYING TO BE VERY SIMILAR, REGARDLESS OF THE LOCATION, AGE OR BACKGROUND OF THE PUPILS



The second focus group took place at The Brighton Home Club. Seven Irish Traveller young people, aged 5–11, took part.

The final focus group took place in London and was hosted by the Traveller Movement along with the Roma Support Group. The group comprised three Irish Traveller and four Roma young people, all aged between 8–18. All groups were mixed sex.

Although this was a small qualitative study, we found that the feedback from young people about bullying to be very similar, regardless of the location, age or background of the pupils.

This report is entirely based on these findings from the focus groups and includes direct quotes from the young people who participated.

# FINDINGS: WHAT GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER YOUNG PEOPLE TOLD US ABOUT BULLYING

## A lack of understanding and visibility of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history and culture

**"People don't understand being Gypsy is a race, not a choice"**

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people said that they feel invisible within schools. They said that there is no acknowledgement of their ethnicities, histories and cultures within the school environment or curriculum. This made them feel different, excluded and like other people in the school didn't understand them.

**"They haven't lived the same lives as us, they don't know how we live so it makes me feel separated."**

**"Don't teach nothing about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history or culture. Makes you feel like no one understands."**

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people said that other people (young people and school staff) did not understand their language. This meant, for example, that their use of language was mocked or misused.

**"They take our terms and misuse them. Becomes fashionable, but they get it wrong. Don't understand it's from our language."**



"YOU DON'T SEE ANY REPRESENTATION OF GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER IN SCHOOLS. WE ARE INVISIBLE."

**YOUNG PERSON**

Young people also said that other people didn't understand their culture. This meant that they felt others avoided them or made naive assumptions about how they lived.

For example, many said that others don't understand the rich history and traditions of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and don't understand that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people often live in houses.

**"They avoid us. People say 'they're coming, they're coming'. We have caravans on our drive-way, but people make things up about other things we have one there. They don't understand we can live in a house. They say you can't be Gypsy if you live in a house. They laugh and say 'you live in a caravan'!"**



Even though they were proud of their history, race and culture, many young people chose not to talk about this to young people or school staff who were not Gypsy, Roma or Traveller. Some young people said they sometimes tried to hide that they were Gypsy, Roma or Traveller as they were worried people would judge them and treat them differently. Many explained that they mainly chose to spend their time with family members or other Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people.

"I'M PROUD OF MY CULTURE, I'VE STUDIED IT, BUT I DON'T REALLY TALK ABOUT IT. I DIDN'T WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW."

**YOUNG PERSON**



Photo courtesy of Mary Turner

## Being labelled and judged

***"They don't like that we're Gypsy, cos of our culture"***

The majority of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people told us that a lack of understanding of their history, ethnicity and culture meant that other people (particularly adults) held strong prejudiced and racist assumptions about them.

Many young people said that others made assumptions about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, including that they were inherently bad people, were likely to steal, were troublemakers and were more aggressive.

***"They said 'Gypsies stealing'. I don't steal."***

"THEY THINK WE ARE BAD PEOPLE. THEY THINK WE ARE ALL THE SAME."

**YOUNG PERSON**



Young men in particular said that school staff regularly tried to stop them hanging around together in groups, based on the assumption they were troublemakers. They felt that this did not happen to other groups of young people. They also talked of being followed by teachers and searched far more frequently.

**"100% I think they don't do nothin' because they don't like me. They think I'm a 'chav'<sup>3</sup> in the community. I'm different compared to them you see. When I'm with my friends they always try and split me up, cos I have friends who are all Travellers. But they always split up our group. They don't do that to the groups who aren't Travellers."**

**"They don't like it when Gypsies are together. They think we do bad things because we are Gypsies. They are racist."**

**"Teachers follow you. We had four teachers following us down the corridor."**

"WE GET BAG SEARCHES MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE."

YOUNG PERSON

## Inaccessible and unfair teaching and learning

"IN PRIMARY, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND IN MATHS AND THE TEACHER SAID 'IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYWAY, YOU'RE NOT GONNA DO ANYTHING WHEN YOU'RE OLDER EXCEPT STAY AT HOME."

YOUNG PERSON

Young people also talked about negative assumptions about their attitudes to learning. Several young people gave examples of teachers telling them they were stupid, did not want to learn, or there was no point in trying to teach them due to their race and culture.

**"They think we're stupid. They tell us that there's no point as we don't wanna learn."**

<sup>3</sup>'Chav' in Romani means child and is spelt chauv. However, the word is also used as a derogatory term. The Oxford dictionary defines it as a young person of a type characterised by brash and loutish behaviour (usually with connotations of a low social status).

Many young people said it was obvious that teachers did not want them in class and they would be treated unfairly compared to others who were not Gypsy, Roma or Traveller.

**"Feels like the teacher targets you. You're the only Traveller in the classroom. Feels like they target us. They're waiting to get us out the room. Like, everyone can be talking, but we'll be the only one that's sent out."**

"THE TEACHERS JUST DON'T WANT YOU IN THE CLASS. THEY MAKE YOU FEEL UNWANTED. THEY AUTOMATICALLY THINK YOU'RE TROUBLE."

**YOUNG PERSON**

**"She targets me all the time. Everyone's talking, but if I talk I'm the one that gets sent out."**

**"They obviously target us and go for us. They're always looking at us. We're always getting sent out."**

Several young people said the teachers assumed they didn't want to learn, rather than thinking about potential learning needs. A number of Roma young people in particular said that the teachers made few attempts to make learning accessible to them, despite English not being their first language.

**"They say 'ah you are from Romania – this is why you don't understand'!"**

**"You're not learning, sit at the back. The favourites sit at the front. They think we don't want to learn. They have favourites."**



Photo courtesy of Mary Turner

Young people described how they would often ask for help to understand, but that this would be ignored. If they tried to translate for other young people, they would often be separated, told to leave the class, or given detentions.

Thus, young people were trying to learn by asking for help, but then being blamed and judged for doing so. This made them feel dejected, sad and angry.

***"They call me stupid, but they don't explain to me when I put my hand up to ask."***

***"This feels very sad and angry. We try to be calm, but it's hard. It's unfair."***

***"Makes you think what's the point?"***

***"Makes you wanna do something!"***

"MY FRIEND HAD TO EXPLAIN TO ME AS I DIDN'T SPEAK MUCH ENGLISH. THE TEACHER STOPPED US SITTING TOGETHER SO NO ONE COULD EXPLAIN TO ME. WHEN WE TELL THEM WHAT WE WERE SAYING, THE TEACHER DOESN'T BELIEVE US."

**YOUNG PERSON**



Photo courtesy of Matty Downes

"THEY HEAR, THEY SEE [WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US] BUT THEY DON'T DO ANYTHING."

YOUNG PERSON



## Unchallenged racist and offensive language about Gypsy<sup>4</sup>, Roma and Traveller people and communities

Young people said that racist and offensive language about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and communities was heard frequently in secondary schools and less frequently in primary schools.

They felt this language was used in different ways. A lot of offensive and racist terms were used casually by young people and staff due to a lack of understanding of their meaning. At other times, racist terms were targeted directly at Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people. They said that racist language was rarely challenged or discussed and did not seem to be given the same level importance as other racist language.

**"Not dealt with in the same way other racial bullying is dealt with. For them, racial slurs against Gypsies aren't dealt with in the same way as other racial groups. It's seen as a big deal for other racial groups but not for us."**

**"Racist language goes unchallenged."**

**"They call us pikeys<sup>5</sup> all the time."**

This reported frequent, yet unchallenged, use of racist language meant that young people did not see the point in telling a member of school staff. They said it would either be disbelief or that nothing

<sup>4</sup> For the majority of Roma communities, use of the word 'Gypsy' is considered offensive. English Romany Gypsies use this as an accepted term for themselves but when used against a Roma person, this is usually offensive.

<sup>5</sup> 'Pikey' is a racist slur referring to members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The word is probably derived from the word 'turnpike' from the nineteenth century.

would be done about it.

**"I told the teacher what was happening and they didn't do anything. I got angry because no one ever does anything and then we get in trouble."**

**"Can't say anything to the teacher, they don't do nothing anyway."**

"THEY THINK YOU'RE A 'BULLY' IF YOU'RE A TRAVELLER. THEY THINK WE'RE GOING TO BULLY THEM, SO THEY IGNORE US"

**YOUNG PERSON**

## Not being believed: "They think we bully"

Most young people attributed the majority of poor or bullying behaviour they experienced to the adults in schools. Many of the young men said they did not experience bullying from other young people because they protected themselves by staying with their friends and family members. They also said that they were not bullied because people assumed Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people were all 'bullies'.

**"I ain't too bothered, I stay with my cousins and family, not mates. My mates are ok, but it's people you don't know. They think you're a Gypsy so you'll beat them up."**

Where they did experience bullying behaviour from other young people, they felt they were not believed if they spoke to an adult. Several

described how they were 'picked' on but then labelled as the problem, told they must have done something to deserve it, or blamed. As such, they said they were often treated punitively, even when they were being targeted.

**"People don't see the problem happening to us, they just see us as a kid who's being naughty. I got hit. He got a detention, I got excluded for a week."**

**"If it's a Gorja<sup>6</sup> [being bullied], they're believed, but if it's a Gypsy, they won't believe us."**

As such, the experiences of most young people who said they had been bullied in some way followed similar pattern: get bullied, tell, disbelieved, then blamed.

<sup>6</sup> Gorja (Gawjie) means a non-travelling person.

"IN YEAR 10-11, TWO GIRLS **BULLIED ME** AND **PHYSICALLY ATTACKED ME**. TOLD SEVERAL TEACHERS. LITERALLY **NOTHING WAS DONE** ABOUT IT UNTIL I SPOKE TO MR. [NAME REDACTED]. IT TOOK ME GOING THROUGH MY MUM EMAILING. TOOK SO MUCH FOR ANYTHING TO BE DONE ABOUT IT. THERE'S MEANT TO BE ALL THESE PEOPLE IN PLACE TO STOP THIS... TEACHERS, PASTORAL TEAM AND ALL THAT. **TOOK ME GOING TO THE HEAD BEFORE ANYTHING WAS DONE."**

YOUNG PERSON

## Retaliation

Many young people said they felt the only way to tackle bullying or racist language was to retaliate.

Young men in particular felt it was their responsibility to 'fight back' to protect themselves, their friends or family. Others felt like they were driven to retaliate as they got angrier and angrier when nothing was done about it or they were repeatedly disbelieved. They told us they were then likely to be the ones to get into trouble, with no efforts to address the bullying or racist language they had experienced.

**"You get angrier and angrier and angrier until you get a detention"**

**"Deal with it myself"**

**"Got into boxing to learn to stick up for myself"**

**"You learn to expect it!"**

**"I told my teacher I'd just been called a 'gypo'. They said 'well maybe if you weren't the way you were, you wouldn't get bullied'. So they're telling you if you weren't a Gypsy you wouldn't be bullied."**

As a result of not being believed and no action being taken, many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people said they, family members, or members of their community had decided to be homeschooled, as they were afraid of going to school. This was particularly so for young women.

Young people who were in school spoke of feeling like they should change how they act or talk to prevent bullying.

"BEING RACIST, EVERYONE THINKS IT'S NORMAL AND OK AGAINST GYPSIES. YOU RETALIATE AND IT'S YOUR FAULT."

YOUNG PERSON

# RECOMMENDATIONS: WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO BULLYING?

We asked the young people what they think needs to happen to better prevent and respond to bullying of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people.

## Awareness and celebrating Gypsy, Roma and Traveller ethnicities and cultures

**"Explain that being a Traveller don't change who you are."**

Tackling prejudicial and racist stereotypes and assumptions about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people is vital in creating a more welcoming and inclusive environment and prevent bullying.

**"People need to understand that Gypsies are a race"**

This should include learning about and tackling racist language. Promoting an inclusive culture should include learning about and celebrating the rich Gypsy, Roma and Traveller histories and cultures.

**"Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history month so they know what our life is like."**

**"They teach you about LGBT – why not Gypsy, Roma and Travellers?"**

**"Teach about the way you live, our lifestyle"**

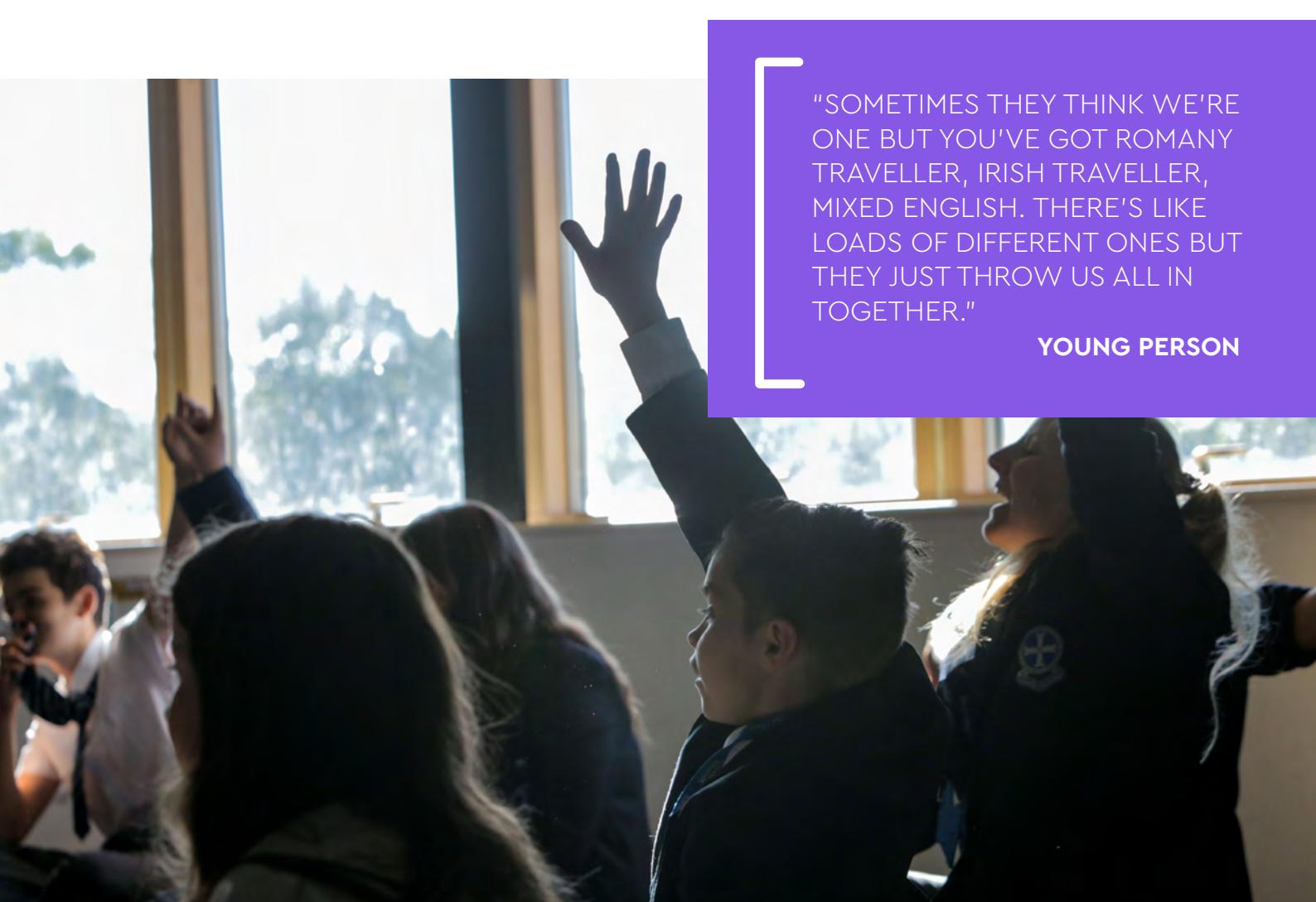
**"I want people to understand the ways we talk our words and phrases."**

**"They should tell people all the contributions Gypsies and Travellers have made in history"**

This should include celebrating the different members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities as well as promoting visible images of well-known or famous Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

Young people said that this should include Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month as well as being embedded across the curriculum throughout the school year in lessons and assemblies. This teaching should be developed and delivered with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people and communities. For example, this could include:

- Learning about traditional foods and dishes in home economics
- History
- Learning about racism towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in PSHE
- Art and exploring the rich cultural and artistic history of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities



"SOMETIMES THEY THINK WE'RE ONE BUT YOU'VE GOT ROMANY TRAVELLER, IRISH TRAVELLER, MIXED ENGLISH. THERE'S LIKE LOADS OF DIFFERENT ONES BUT THEY JUST THROW US ALL IN TOGETHER."

YOUNG PERSON

## Awareness of bullying

All teachers, support and pastoral staff should learn about prejudice, racism and bullying towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people and communities. They should also learn about the experiences of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people in schools and how to treat Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people fairly and inclusively.



## Challenge racist language and promote positive images

Schools should proactively challenge racist and offensive language used about and towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people.

This should include learning about what the words really mean and how they make people feel, as well as tackling racist language when it is used.

Several young people also felt it would help if there were Gypsy, Roma and Traveller teachers in the school and members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community coming in to schools to help to raise awareness and be positive, visible role models.



Photo courtesy of Jonathan Syer

"WHEN PEOPLE SAY 'STOP DOING THAT, YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A GYPSY' THE TEACHER SHOULD CALL THEM OUT OR TELL THEM OFF."

YOUNG PERSON

## Inclusive teaching and good relationships

Young people wanted teaching methods to be more inclusive and accessible, particularly for those who speak English as an additional language. Several young people said that English was their third or fourth language and they needed more support in the classroom. This included teachers or support staff explaining things to them if they did not understand; using more visual teaching methods to aid learning; and allowing young people to translate for each other. They also spoke of how it important it was for teachers to spend time getting to know them and being interested in them.

**"If you don't understand the exercise [due to English being second language] explain it, help us. But not all teachers do that. They kick you out because you don't understand the exercise."**

"THE GOOD TEACHERS NOTICE YOU. THEY NOTICE WHEN YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH YOUR WORK. THEY NOTICE THAT CHANGE ON YOUR FACE IF SOMETHING IS UP. THEY NOTICE YOU AND COME AND CHECK ON YOU. THEY GET TO KNOW YOU"

**YOUNG PERSON**



## Respond to bullying

All young people spoke of the need for better responses to bullying. Firstly, they needed to know they would be believed when they spoke to an adult, particularly if the bullying or poor behaviour was from a member of school staff. They wanted adults to give them time, to listen to them and to reassure them, rather than to jump to conclusions, blame them or dismiss it.

**"They should be kind. If you're crying they come and ask you what's going on. They notice and help you out. They tell off the person who upset you."**

"TEACHER SETS ME DOWN WHEN I'M ANGRY. HE TALKS TO ME, LISTENS, HELPS ME."

**YOUNG PERSON**

**"They listen."**

**"If the teachers are calmer with me and listened I wouldn't get so angry"**

Young people want to know that the teachers will respond appropriately and take action towards young people or staff who displayed racist, prejudiced and/or bullying behaviours. Young people felt strongly that bullying towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people should be recorded as racist.

**"Being stricter, punishing, doing something when it happens."**

They felt strongly that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people should be involved in working with the school to improve responses to bullying.



Photo courtesy of Mary Turner



# SUPPORTING TOOLS AND RESOURCES

This section aims to equip you with the tools and resources to take this work forward in your school or setting and ensure that it is a safe, secure and inclusive environment for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

## Gypsy, Roma and Traveller school audit tool

To accompany this report, we have developed a **school audit tool** to support you to review your current practice and create a tailored action plan to support you tackle to bullying of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

We have incorporated this tool into our flagship whole school online anti-bullying programme, All Together. Schools work to achieve 'All Together School' status by

evidencing their work to reduce bullying and improve pupil wellbeing. Schools have access to the All Together Hub which comprises a suite of tailored tools and resources to support you. This includes the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller school audit tool where you can create a specific action plan and evidence the work you are doing to tackle bullying of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

To find out more about All Together and to register, please visit:

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/alltogether](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/alltogether)



## Crystal's Vardo

Friends, Families and Travellers have teaching resources related to their play for schools, Crystal's Vardo, which has been running since 2012. The story is told through the eyes of Crystal, a young Gypsy girl who has been bullied at school.

The aim of the play is to give teachers a positive tool to help tackle some of the issues faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in schools and to raise awareness of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller histories and cultures. The play has since gone on to perform at over 100 venues including 70 schools with an audience of over 12,000 in total.

Schools nationally have received the play very positively and when asked, 92% said Crystal's Vardo could effectively help deal with bullying.

89% of the 45 teachers asked said their knowledge of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history and culture had increased significantly as a result of seeing the play. Of those, 58% said they knew little or nothing about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History before seeing the play.



"GAVE A VERY POWERFUL MESSAGE TO CHILDREN WITH REGARDS TO APPRECIATING THE IMPACT OF DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE TOWARDS OTHER CHILDREN AND HOW WE SHOULD ALL FIGHT TO ENSURE THAT ALL CHILDREN ARE VALUED AND CARED FOR AND THAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD ALWAYS BE EMBRACED!"

**STOCKTON HEATH PRIMARY, WARRINGTON**

Photo courtesy of Lidia Crisafulli

You can find out more and access the materials here:

**[www.gypsy-traveller.org/about-crystals-vardo](http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/about-crystals-vardo)**

## Further tools and resources

On the Anti-Bullying Alliance website, you will also find a collection of further tools and resources to support you. Please visit:

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/GRT-tools>

We will continue to update the All Together Hub and our webpages with new resources, case studies and examples from schools to support you to tackle bullying of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

If you have any good practice examples which you think should be included, please email us at [aba@ncb.org.uk](mailto:aba@ncb.org.uk).

We will be keeping this report with recommendations and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller school audit tool in review and we would really appreciate your feedback.

If you could spare a few minutes to complete our short survey, we would be very grateful: <https://antibullyingalliance.typeform.com/to/zvfUUY92>



Photo courtesy of Matty Downes

# REFERENCES

Cabinet Office (2018), Race Disparity Audit. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/686071/Revised\\_RDA\\_report\\_March\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686071/Revised_RDA_report_March_2018.pdf)

UK Parliament (2019), The Women and Equalities Committee. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/360/full-report.html>

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018), Barometer of Prejudice. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/national-barometer-of-prejudice-and-discrimination-in-britain.pdf>

The Children's Society (2007), This is Who We Are. <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/publications-library/who-we-are-study-experiences-rroma-gypsy->

Save the Children (2005), Having our Say – peer research by young Gypsy Travellers found that three-quarters of young Gypsy Travellers said they have been picked on by other school pupils because of their background.

The Traveller Movement (2017), 'The last acceptable form of racism? The pervasive discrimination and prejudice experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' <https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/userupload/equality-human-rights/last-acceptable-form-of-racism-traveller-movement-report.pdf>

Friends, Families and Travellers (2019), Analysis of Education Surveys and Casework.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Anti-Bullying Alliance and Friends, Families and Travellers would sincerely like to thank the children and young people who participated in the focus groups which inform this report, and their parents and carers.

We would also like to thank the staff at Steyning Grammar School, The Brighton Home Club, The Roma Support Group and The Traveller Movement. Without their collaboration, the focus groups would not have been possible.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for funding this project.

# ABOUT US



## NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

Part of the family



The Anti-Bullying Alliance is a unique coalition of organisations and individuals, working together to achieve our vision to: stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance is part of the National Children's Bureau, a charity that for more than 50 years has been at the forefront of campaigning for children and young people's rights.

Friends, Families and Travellers is a leading national charity that works on behalf of all Gypsies, Roma and Travellers regardless of ethnicity, culture or background. We seek to end racism and discrimination against Gypsies, Roma and Travellers and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life. We provide advice and consultancy, promote health and wellbeing, contribute to research and policy making, deliver training and much more.





**NATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S  
BUREAU**  
Part of the family

**Anti-Bullying  
Alliance**

© National Children's Bureau – Registered charity No. 258825. Registered in England and Wales No. 952717. Registered office: 23 Mentmore Terrace, London, E8 3PN. A Company Limited by Guarantee.