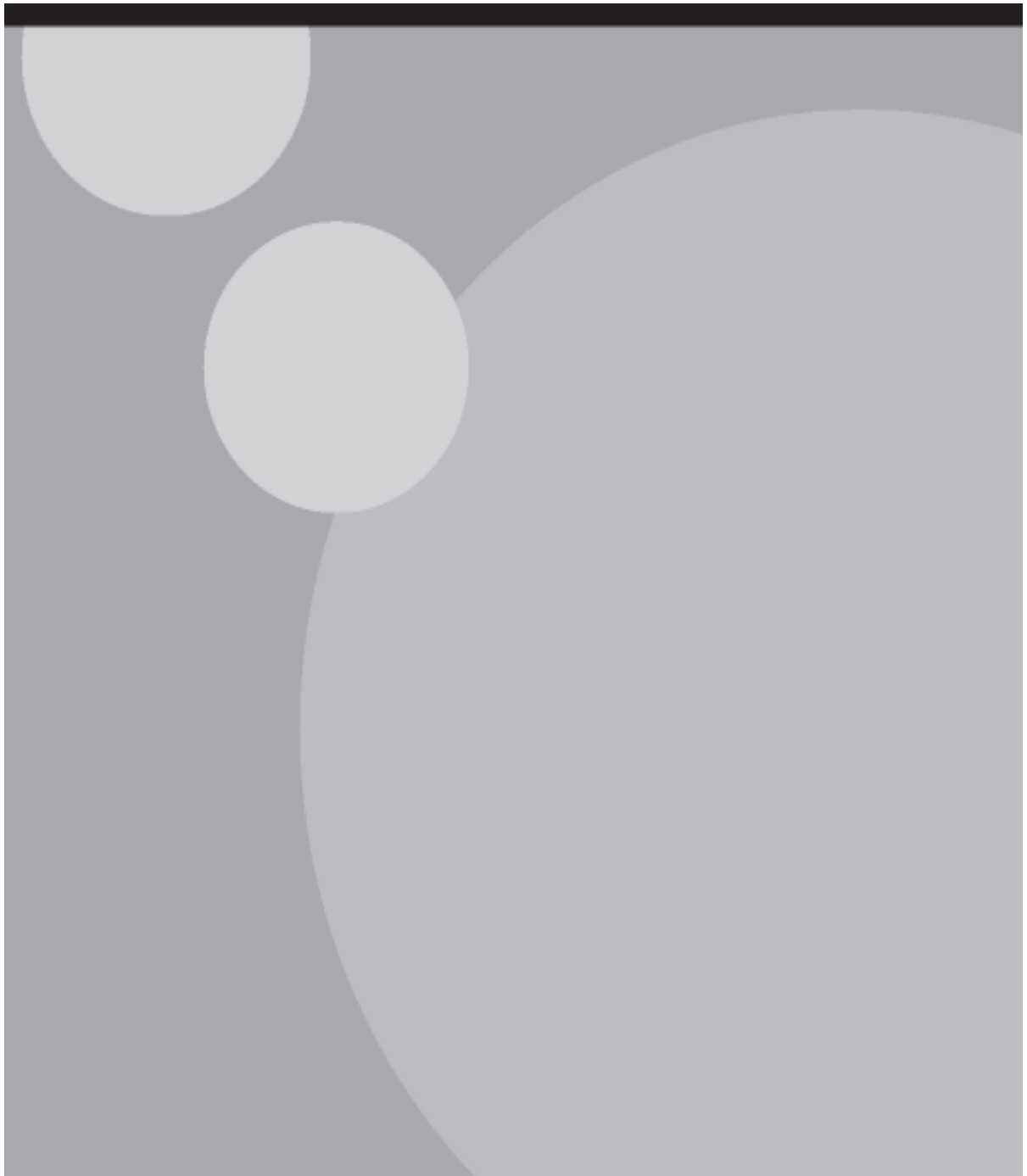




Progress report by the ministerial working group on
tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and
Travellers





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group on tackling inequalities experienced by
Gypsies and Travellers

April, 2012
Department for Communities and Local Government

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Ministerial foreword

Improving social mobility is a principal goal of the Coalition Government's social policy. We are determined to give everyone the ability and aspiration to prosper, breaking down barriers to social mobility.

Across Government we are very concerned that Gypsies and Travellers are being held back by some of the worst outcomes of any group across a range of social indicators. The Ministerial Working Group therefore brought together ministers from key government departments under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to look at ways to reduce and tackle these inequalities. This supports our commitment in the Coalition Agreement to promote improved community relations and opportunities for ethnic minority communities.

This progress report outlines the challenges, but also includes 28 commitments from across Government that will help mainstream services work better with Gypsies and Travellers. We intend to produce another report once we have had an opportunity to assess progress in delivering against these commitments. By working with the Gypsy and Traveller communities and other external partners, and with local services driving change, we can all help to produce measurable and lasting improvements in the life chances Gypsies and Travellers.

I want to thank the members of the working group for their help in getting us to this point. This is an important issue; if we want to create strong communities, built on a shared set of values, we must act to ensure that no-one, or no one group, is held back or left on the margins.



Andrew Stunell MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Communities and Local Government

Members of the working group

Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Chair)

Lynne Featherstone MP, Home Office

Nick Gibb MP, Department for Education

Mark Hoban MP, HM Treasury

Lord McNally, Ministry of Justice

Maria Miller MP, Department for Work and Pensions

Anne Milton MP, Department of Health

Andrew Stunell MP, Department for Communities and Local Government

Chapter 1

Introduction

Fairness is one of the values of the Coalition Government, along with freedom and responsibility... For us, fairness means everyone having the chance to do well irrespective of their beginnings.¹

- 1.1 Gypsies and Travellers experience, and are being held back by, some of the worst outcomes of any group, across a wide range of social indicators:
 - In 2011 just 12% of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils achieved five or more good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, compared with 58.2% of all pupils²
 - There is an excess prevalence of miscarriages, stillbirths, neonatal deaths in Gypsy and Traveller communities³
 - Around 20% of traveller caravans are on unauthorised sites.⁴
 - Studies have reported that Gypsy and Traveller communities are subjected to hostility and discrimination⁵ and in many places, lead separate, parallel lives from the wider community.⁶
- 1.2 In November 2010, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government set up a ministerial working group to tackle these issues, bringing together ministers from seven Government departments⁷.
- 1.3 A lack of trust and understanding between Gypsy and Traveller communities, their neighbours and mainstream service providers was identified as a factor in many of the problems. The ministerial working group looked at what Government could do and through a series of meetings developed proposals that would help mainstream services work more effectively with Gypsies and Travellers.

¹ HM Government (2011); *Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers; A Strategy for Social Mobility*

² Source: Dept for Education

³ Parry, G. et al. (2004): *The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers in England*. University of Sheffield.

⁴ DCLG; *Traveller Caravan Count*

⁵ See for example, Greenfields M, Home R, Cemlyn S et al., *West of England - Gypsy Traveller Accommodation (and Other Needs) Assessment 2006–2016*, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (2007)

⁶ CRE *Common Ground* 2006 p13

⁷ Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP (Chair) and Andrew Stunell MP, Department for Communities and Local Government; Nick Gibb MP, Department for Education; Anne Milton MP, Department of Health; Lynne Featherstone MP, Home Office; Lord McNally, Ministry of Justice; Maria Miller MP, Department for Work and Pensions; Mark Hoban MP, HM Treasury

- 1.4 This report contains 28 commitments, for which Government will be held to account, in the following areas:
- Identifying ways of raising educational aspirations and attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
 - Identifying ways to improve health outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers within the proposed new structures of the NHS.
 - Encouraging appropriate site provision; building on £60m Traveller Pitch Funding and New Homes Bonus incentives.
 - Tackling hate crime against Gypsies and Travellers and improving their interaction with the criminal justice system.
 - Improving knowledge of how Gypsies and Travellers engage with services that provide a gateway to work opportunities and working with the financial services industry to improve access to financial products and services.
 - Sharing good practice in engagement between Gypsies and Travellers and public service providers.
- 1.5 The working group took an evidence-based approach, but we recognise that the evidence base on Gypsies and Travellers can be weak. This report outlines work done to improve understanding of how Gypsies and Travellers use services and includes commitments to identify gaps in data and research.
- 1.6 The focus of the Ministerial Working Group was on ethnic Gypsies and Travellers (including those who are living in conventional housing and, where appropriate, travelling show people). Some issues affecting Roma in this country overlap with those impacting Gypsies and Travellers; Department for Education policy and evidence explicitly includes Roma, for example, and that is reflected in this report.
- 1.7 The devolved administrations have their own approaches towards Gypsies and Travellers in areas where responsibility is devolved. Some of the policy areas covered by this report such as health, accommodation and education therefore only apply to England. The commitments relating to the work of the police to address hate crime and those relating to the criminal justice system apply to England and Wales. Commitments relating to Department for Work and Pensions employment services apply to England, Scotland and Wales.

Chapter 2

Improving outcomes in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller education

Introduction

- 2.1 At present, Gypsy and Roma pupils, along with pupils of Irish Traveller heritage, are amongst the lowest-achieving groups at every Key Stage of education, although individual pupils can and do achieve very well. In 2011, just 25% of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils achieved national expectations in English and mathematics at the end of their primary education, compared with 74% of all pupils. At the end of secondary education, just 12% of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils achieved five or more good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, compared with 58.2% of all pupils.
- 2.2 Attainment gaps are a complex issue and the underperformance of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils may be due to a combination of factors, including financial deprivation, low levels of parental literacy and aspiration for their children's academic achievement, poor attendance and bullying. There is a particularly strong link between deprivation and underachievement and in primary schools, 43.2% of all registered pupils registered as either Gypsy, Roma or of Irish Traveller background are currently eligible for Free School Meals; this figure rises to 45.3% in secondary schools and 57.5% in Special Schools. Those pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals are already benefiting directly from the Pupil Premium, which is providing an additional £488 per pupil in 2010-2011 to help raise their attainment. This figure will rise to £600 per pupil in 2012-2013, when the premium will be extended to all pupils who have been eligible for Free School Meals during the past six years, whether or not they currently qualify.
- 2.3 The Government is clear that schools and local authorities are best placed to respond to local needs and priorities, and should take a lead in tackling the underperformance of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils. But for them to succeed, they must be given the freedom and funding to do so. That is why this year we have once again provided just over £201m for ethnic minority achievement via the Dedicated Schools Grant, to help schools improve the performance of ethnic minority and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, as well as those with English as an Additional Language. Schools can use this funding to 'buy in' support or specialist advice, to employ an additional teacher or teaching assistant or to fund community outreach work with local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. Where Schools Forums wish it, the funding may be retained at local authority level to provide centralised Ethnic Minority Achievement and Traveller Education Support Services.

Focusing on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged

- 2.4 Along with this increased freedom however, comes increased responsibility and, in the future, the Government intends to ensure that schools have the same high expectations for all their pupils, regardless of background or ethnicity. We will continue to monitor and publish information about the progress and attainment of individual pupil groups, based on national tasks and tests, and we will pay particular attention to the achievements of disadvantaged, underperforming or vulnerable groups, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.
- 2.5 We are also refocusing school inspection around the core areas of achievement, teaching, leadership and behaviour/safety. Within this more streamlined approach is a requirement for Ofsted to consider the extent to which the education provided at the school meets the needs of all its pupils. This means considering the data on all groups and individuals, with a particular emphasis on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Commitment 1

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are specifically highlighted as a vulnerable group in the revised Ofsted framework, ensuring that school inspections will pay particular attention to their progress, attainment and attendance.

- 2.6 It is not just schools that have a responsibility to support the most vulnerable children in our society – Local Authorities also have a crucial role to play in safeguarding the well-being of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including ensuring their equal access to high quality education.

Commitment 2

The Department for Education will establish a Virtual Head Teachers pilot for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, along the lines of the successful Looked After Children model. The pilot will run in a small number of Local Authorities with higher than average numbers of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, beginning in April 2012. Funding will be allocated to each authority for the appointment of a senior dedicated individual to champion the interests of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils across the authority and to monitor and respond to issues of low attainment and attendance. They will provide training and support to schools; work to identify and return to school those Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children who are missing from education and raise awareness among schools and others about the barriers to success which these children face - and how best to overcome them.

We will carefully monitor the impact of the pilot on attendance, attainment and rates of permanent and fixed exclusions and will share the results with schools and local authorities.

Improving attendance

- 2.7 Over the last few years the level of participation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in early years and primary education has improved. Attendance remains generally low however, and the gains in primary have not been mirrored in secondary education. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils have the lowest attendance profile of any minority ethnic group and national data show a marked decline in the number of enrolled Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils between primary and secondary school. There are continued concerns about the number of children who fail to make the transition to secondary school or who drop out before Year 9.

Commitment 3

The Department for Education will introduce the following measure designed to tackle poor attendance among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

Existing legislation (set out in Section 444 (6) of the 1996 Education Act) protects mobile Gypsy and Traveller families from prosecution for their children's non-attendance provided that:

- they are engaged in a trade of business of such a nature that requires them to travel from place to place;
- the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade permits; and
- any child aged six or over has attended school for at least 200 half day sessions during the preceding year.

The Government believes that this concession has come to be seen by some schools - and by Gypsy and Traveller families themselves - as giving tacit consent for mobile pupils to benefit only from a significantly shortened school year. We intend to look again at the impact of this legislation and to consult on whether it should be repealed.

In parallel with this action, we intend to review the statutory guidance in relation to Children Missing Education and will make sure this reflects the need to identify Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, who are missing out on their education.

- 2.8 In addition to generally low attendance, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils also have the highest levels of permanent and fixed term exclusions when compared to other minority ethnic groups and to pupils entitled to Free School Meals.

Commitment 4

In response to the unacceptably high levels of exclusion among certain pupil groups, the Department for Education will take steps to assess the impact of school-based commissioning, alternative provision and early intervention on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

In the Schools White Paper in 2010, the Government announced its intention to test a new approach to permanent school exclusion which will see schools, rather than local authorities, placing excluded pupils in appropriate alternative settings, funding the placements from a devolved budget and monitoring both attainment and attendance. The exclusions trial will take place in 300 secondary schools and will cover three school years, beginning in autumn 2011. It will have a particular focus on those disadvantaged and vulnerable groups who are most affected by exclusion including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

Tackling bullying

- 2.9 There is considerable anecdotal evidence that bullying and prejudice against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are contributing to their poor attendance and behaviour – leading to disproportionately high levels of exclusion. It is never acceptable for a child to be victimised because of their ethnicity or religion. We have published advice to schools on their legal powers and obligations to tackle bullying, as well as basic principles of effective anti-bullying strategies adopted by successful schools. The Government will continue to look at the evidence on all forms of prejudice-based bullying, including that experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, and will support schools to use the powers available to them to respond to and prevent poor behaviour and bullying.

Commitment 5

In line with its Schools White Paper commitment, Ofsted is conducting a survey on prejudiced-based bullying, which is now under way. This will involve inspectors talking to pupils about their experiences of bullying and the way in which it is handled in their schools. Bullying of minority groups will be picked up in this survey, and the results will be published in 2012.

Sharing success

- 2.10 A great deal of knowledge already exists within schools about the best way to tackle the underperformance of disadvantaged and underperforming groups. In some of our highest attaining primary and secondary schools, the data suggest that headteachers and staff are working effectively to narrow attainment gaps.

Commitment 6

The Department for Education has approached some of the higher performing primary and secondary schools for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils to find out from them what lies behind their success. The Department for Education will collect and publish brief case studies from each of these schools to be shared with schools, local authorities and education professionals around the country.

- 2.11 While there is a great deal that Government, schools and local authorities can do to boost the attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, the communities themselves must also play their part in addressing this complex and long-standing issue.
- 2.12 In August 2010, the Department for Education established a group made up entirely of representatives from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The group provides a forum for sharing effective practice in raising the attainment and aspirations and promoting more positive school / community links. The Government intends to continue working closely with this group, both in supporting the delivery of these commitments and in shaping future policy direction.

Chapter 3

Improving the health outcomes of Gypsies and Travellers

Introduction

- 3.1 Gypsies and Travellers are a small but significant group who continue to suffer from poor health and lower life expectancy.
- 3.2 Studies consistently show differences in life expectancy of over 10% less than the general population, although a recent study stated that the general population were living up to 50% longer than Gypsies and Travellers.⁸ Research also shows that the health of Gypsies and Travellers starts to deteriorate markedly when individuals are over 50.⁹
- 3.3 Other health issues such as high infant mortality rates, high maternal mortality rates, low child immunisation levels, mental health issues, substance misuse issues and diabetes are also seen to be prevalent in the Gypsy and Traveller communities.¹⁰
- 3.4 Gypsies and Travellers, along with other vulnerable groups, experience a range of health needs, which are exacerbated by social factors. Those with multiple complex needs make chaotic and greater use of health care services than other groups and experience a range of barriers, in particular when accessing primary care services. Gypsies and Travellers often lack trust in health professionals to provide appropriate care and to engage with their community on equitable terms. Gypsies and Travellers can fear hostility and/or prejudice from healthcare providers.

⁸ Barry J, Herity B, Solan J. (1987): *The Travellers' health status study, vital statistics of travelling people, 1987*. Dublin: Health Research Board, Baker, M, (2005) *Leeds Baseline Census 2004-2005 Gypsies and Travellers*. Leeds: Leeds Racial Equality Council,

It is important to note that whilst studies show that life expectancy is low across the group, life expectancy can vary across the Gypsy and Traveller community.

⁹ Richardson, J. Bloxson, J. & Greenfields, M. (2007) *East Kent Sub-Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Report (2007-2012)*. Leicester: De Montfort University. Available at: <http://www.doverdc.co.uk/pdf/EastKentGTAAREport17July07.pdf> [Accessed 24 October 2011].

¹⁰ Parry, G. et al. (2004): *The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers in England*. University of Sheffield.

Health outcomes

- 3.5 National data are not collected about the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, or the services they receive. As a result, evidence of the health of Gypsies and Travellers is relatively weak. However, studies have found that their health status is much poorer than that of the general population and other marginalised groups:
- 39% of Gypsies and Travellers have a long-term illness compared with 29% of age and sex matched comparators, even after controlling for socio-economic status and other marginalised groups¹¹
 - Travellers are 3 times more likely to have chronic cough or bronchitis, even after smoking is taken into account¹²
 - 22% of Gypsies and Travellers reported having asthma and 34% reported chest pain compared to 5% and 22% of the general population¹³
 - Gypsies and Travellers are nearly three times more likely to be anxious than average and just over twice as likely to be depressed¹⁴
 - Irish Travellers are 3 times as likely to die by suicide than the general population¹⁵
 - There is an excess prevalence of miscarriages, stillbirths and neonatal deaths in Gypsy and Traveller communities and high rates of maternal death during pregnancy and shortly after childbirth¹⁶
 - A high prevalence of diabetes has been reported in Gypsy and Traveller communities, and a lack of community knowledge of the risk factors¹⁷
 - Studies show that Gypsy and Traveller women live 12 years less than women in the general population and men 10 years less, although recent research suggests the life expectancy gap could be much higher.¹⁸

Access to health services

- 3.6 Providing and commissioning services is complex. Commissioners may not address need; providers may not have incentives to deliver high quality care to the hard-to-reach; specialist practitioners often work in isolation and feel undervalued; mainstream practitioners can lack the skills and support to deal effectively with high-need clients.

¹¹ Parry, G. et al. (2004): *The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers in England*. University of Sheffield.

¹² *ibid*

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ Rose-Walker, M (2008): *Suicide Among the Irish Traveller Community 2000-2006*. Wicklow County Council

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ Saunders, R. (2007): The Forgotten Minority. *Diabetes Update*, Spring 2007

¹⁸ **Barry J**, Herity B, Solan J. (1987): *The Travellers' health status study, vital statistics of travelling people, 1987*. Dublin: Health Research Board, Baker, M, (2005) *Leeds Baseline Census 2004-2005 Gypsies and Travellers*. Leeds: Leeds Racial Equality Council,

It is important to note that whilst studies show that life expectancy is low across the group, life expectancy can vary across the Gypsy and Traveller community.

3.7 Common challenges faced by Gypsies and Travellers accessing primary care services can include:

- Registration. One of the most commonly reported barriers is GPs' insistence on having proof of identity and proof of a permanent address.¹⁹
- Poor literacy and, for recently migrant Roma communities, poor English, can make it very difficult to navigate the health system.
- Anticipation of discrimination from GP practices or at A&E. As a result, some, particularly those living in bricks and mortar accommodation, will not identify their ethnicity.²⁰
- Health professionals lack the knowledge, confidence and expertise about the beliefs and culture of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.²¹
- Those who are mobile have an increased reliance on A&E and walk-in centres, which can lead to problems with follow up and continuity of care.
- Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) have not ensured the diversity of representation needed to ensure all members of a community, including Gypsies and Travellers, can have their say or get involved in influencing local services.

Action to improve health outcomes

3.8 Tackling health inequalities is a Government priority, part of a wider focus on fairness and social justice. Everyone should have the same opportunities to lead a healthy life, no matter where they live or who they are. As well as helping people live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives, we aim to improve the health of the poorest fastest.

3.9 Tackling health inequalities is at the heart of the reforms of the NHS and public health. The NHS Commissioning Board and clinical commissioning groups will be under a duty to have regard to the need to reduce health inequalities in access to and the outcomes from healthcare.

3.10 The Government's health reforms aim to put patients at the heart of the NHS by giving them more choice and control over their healthcare, including more choice of GP practice. This means that patients will be able to choose a GP practice that can meet their specific needs.

3.11 Public Health England will provide information, advice and support to local commissioners, and local authorities will have a ring-fenced public health grant, targeted for health inequalities. We are also developing a health premium that will reward communities for the improvements in health outcomes they achieve and incentivise action to reduce health inequalities.

¹⁹ Cemlyn et al. *Inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers: A review* (EHRC)

²⁰ Van Cleemput, P. et al. (2007) Health-related beliefs and experiences of Gypsies and Travellers: a qualitative study. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*

²¹ *ibid*

Inclusion Health

- 3.12 Within the broad strategy to tackle health inequalities, the Inclusion Health programme aims to improve access and outcomes of the most vulnerable people, including Gypsies and Travellers.
- 3.13 The programme is led by the National Inclusion Health Board. Four working groups of professionals and practitioners will deliver the programme commitments.

Commitment 7

Department of Health will work with the National Inclusion Health Board and the NHS, local government and others to identify what more must be done to include the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the commissioning of health services.

- 3.14 Local authorities will establish a health and wellbeing board and undertake a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will be used to prepare the joint health and wellbeing strategy, which in turn will inform clinical commissioning groups and local authority commissioning plans. The health and wellbeing board will be a key forum to consider service integration across NHS services and health-related services provided by the local authority.

Commitment 8

Department of Health will explore how health and wellbeing boards can be supported to ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers with the worst health outcomes are better reflected in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies.

Improving data and research

- 3.15 Whilst there is some local information, the evidence on health outcomes and successful interventions for Gypsies and Travellers, as with many socially excluded/vulnerable groups, remains relatively weak. Those responsible for Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and commissioning will need access to relevant information to make decisions on which services to commission.

Commitment 9

Department of Health will work with the UCL Institute of Health Equity and the Inclusion Health working groups to identify gaps in data and research, and look to identify the specific interventions that produce positive health outcomes.

- 3.16 A possible focus of early research could be maternal health and child immunisation; studies show that these are significant health issues within Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Commitment 10

Department of Health will work with the Inclusion Health working groups to identify what more needs to be done to improve maternal health, reduce infant mortality and increase immunisation rates.

Improving leadership and workforce

- 3.17 Whilst good progress has been made in some areas on developing links with outreach workers and other health professionals, there is still some way to go to make this happen everywhere. The Inclusion Health programme recognises the need to address prejudice, cultural and practical barriers faced by vulnerable people when accessing health services. Two key areas of work are building clear national and local leadership, and supporting and developing a strong, stable and capable workforce.

Commitment 11

Department of Health will work with the Inclusion Health Board to embed the Inclusion Health programme in training for all health professionals, with the aim of developing a strong, stable and capable workforce that can drive change and make a difference to the lives and health outcomes of the most vulnerable.

A wider determinants approach

- 3.18 To improve health outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers, we need to adopt a more integrated approach, focused on the life course and the wider determinants of health.

Chapter 4

Providing appropriate accommodation

Introduction

- 4.1 Although Gypsies and Travellers are often seen through the prism of high profile unauthorised sites, the vast majority of traveller caravans (80%) are on authorised sites that have planning permission²².
- 4.2 However, there are still around 3000 caravans on unauthorised sites, either on sites developed without planning permission, or on encampments on land not owned by travellers. Gypsies and Travellers living on unauthorised sites can face additional difficulties accessing health and education services and the precarious nature of their homes can further exacerbate inequalities and stifle life chances.
- 4.3 The new planning policy for traveller sites will return decisions on traveller site provision to local authorities who are best placed to know the needs of their communities. We will encourage local authorities to provide appropriate sites and it is important that local planning authorities continue to plan for the needs of all in their community, including Gypsies and Travellers.

Financial incentives

- 4.4 The Department for Communities and Local Government has put in place a package of financial incentives and other support to help local authorities and elected members make the case for the appropriate development of traveller sites in their area.
- 4.5 We secured £60m Traveller Pitch Funding to 2015 as part of the Homes and Communities Agency's Affordable Homes Programme. This investment will help local authorities and other registered providers with the cost of providing new sites. On 7 January 2012 we announced the allocation of £47m that will help provide over 750 new and improved pitches.²³
- 4.6 Instead of top-down targets, we are focusing on providing incentives for development so communities reap benefits and not just costs of development. The New Homes Bonus commenced in April 2011, and will match fund the

²² DCLG; *Traveller Caravan Count January 2011*

²³ DCLG; *Stunell: New site funding offers fairer deal for travellers and the settled community*; <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/planningandbuilding/2061166>

additional council tax raised - using the national average in each band - for new homes and long term empty properties brought back into use, with a premium for affordable homes, for the following 6 years. The New Homes Bonus will operate in exactly the same way for traveller sites as it does for other forms of housing ensuring that policy on traveller sites is aligned with that for other forms of housing and that it is fair for traveller and settled communities. The Government's goal is to increase and underline the local benefits of development. Local authorities that take responsibility and encourage growth should be recognised proportionately.

- 4.7 The New Homes Bonus also means that for the first time we are providing financial incentives to local authorities for the development of all authorised traveller site accommodation. Private provision is a key element of traveller pitch supply; the largest proportion of caravans (and growing) are on private sites; they are usually built by the travellers themselves and many Gypsies and Travellers want to live on them.

Changing perceptions of sites

- 4.8 To help change the perception of traveller sites and address the concern that can develop around traveller site development proposals, we are working on gathering examples of well-kept small private family sites. Gypsy and Traveller representative groups have been invited to lead on this and the Department for Communities and Local Government has also been in contact with local authorities to identify the best sites in their area.

Commitment 12

The Department for Communities and Local Government will help Gypsy and Traveller representative groups showcase small private sites that are well presented and maintained.

Subject to site owners agreeing to have their homes included we will help produce a case study document which local authorities and councillors, potential site residents and the general public could use. It could also be adapted and used in connection with planning applications.

Support for elected councillors

- 4.9 Consultation with local communities about planning applications is a fundamental part of the planning process but councillors can sometimes find this difficult in the face of opposition towards traveller site proposals.
- 4.10 Local Government Group has been running a successful course delivered by councillors for councillors to support them with their leadership role around traveller site provision, including advice on dealing with the controversy that can sometimes accompany planning applications for traveller sites. Councillors

have reported that the training helped them to conduct better planning meetings leading to fair and more effective decision-making.

- 4.11 We are funding this training so it can continue to 2015. The new programme, which starting in autumn 2011, will help the transition to the new planning system. It will support councils or groups of councils to find locally acceptable approaches to increasing the number of planned-for pitches that gain consent in their area without going through the planning appeal process.

Encouraging healthy living conditions

- 4.12 In addition to the provision of accommodation from which health services can be accessed, we want traveller sites to be healthy places to live.
- 4.13 One of the Government's aims in respect of traveller sites is to enable provision of suitable accommodation, which supports healthy lifestyles, and from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure. Local planning authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and should, therefore, ensure that their policies promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services.

Commitment 13

The Government will continue to promote improved health outcomes for travellers through the planning system.

- 4.14 In April 2011 we applied the Mobile Homes Act 1983 to traveller sites owned by local authorities. This means that residents of these sites now have greater protection against eviction and other rights and responsibilities that already apply to residents of other residential mobile home sites. It also means residents can challenge poor site management through the residential property tribunal if the site owner (the local authority) has not fulfilled obligations set out in the pitch agreement.
- 4.15 The terms implied by the Mobile Homes Act into pitch agreements oblige the local authority (where they are the site owner) to maintain the parts of the site they are responsible for in a clean and tidy condition and to repair the amenity blocks provided on the pitch. Likewise, the pitch agreement also obliges residents to maintain, in a clean and tidy condition, their pitch and the outside of their mobile home.
- 4.16 We will review the impact of the application of the Mobile Homes Act to local authority sites in two years' time. This review will look at the extent to which residents are aware of their new rights and responsibilities.

Chapter 5

Tackling hate crime against Gypsies and Travellers

Introduction

- 5.1 We live in a society where prejudice still remains and some people think that it is acceptable to discriminate against an individual or group because of who they are. Hate crime is a reality that affects people in their everyday lives. Incidents can range from verbal abuse and abusive written material through to physical attacks, leading to terrible and sometimes even tragic consequences. It blights communities, threatening community cohesion, spreading hostility and fear.
- 5.2 Studies have reported that Gypsy and Traveller communities are subjected to hostility and discrimination and experience problematic relations with settled communities.²⁴ There is also some evidence of mistrust of criminal justice agencies within Gypsy and Traveller communities and a perception that the criminal justice system serves the settled community better, which may have an impact on their access to and contact with the criminal justice services.²⁵
- 5.3 We are clear that the same standards of behaviour and respect for the law should be expected from all members of the community, whether Gypsies or Travellers or the settled community, based on mutual respect and with equal rights, responsibilities, entitlements and obligations.
- 5.4 The Government is committed to tackling all forms of hate crime, including that which is targeted against Gypsy and Traveller communities. Everyone should have the freedom to live their lives free from fear of targeted hostility or harassment on the grounds of their appearance, ethnicity or lifestyle. Ensuring that the criminal justice system's response to hate crime is effective enough to support those who are affected and deals appropriately with those who commit these sorts of crimes is a key aspect of the Government's approach, forming part of its wider agenda to tackle the barriers to equality.

²⁴ See for example, Greenfields M, Home R, Cemlyn S et al., *West of England - Gypsy Traveller Accommodation (and Other Needs) Assessment 2006–2016*, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (2007)

²⁵ Mason et al (2009). *Access to Justice: a review of existing evidence of the experiences of minority groups based on ethnicity, identity and sexuality*; Ministry of Justice Research Series 7/09

Commitment 14

We have published a new cross-Government hate crime action plan, setting out our vision and approach for tackling hate crime over the remainder of this Parliament.

The plan is based on three core principles, which we believe are necessary to reach our long-term goal. We will focus on:

- Preventing hate crime – by challenging the attitudes that underpin it, and early intervention to prevent it escalating;
- Increasing reporting and access to support – by building victim confidence and supporting local partnerships; and
- Improving the operational response to hate crimes – by better identifying and managing cases, and dealing effectively with offenders.

Definition of hate crime

5.5 The courts have found that Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are ‘racial groups’ within the meaning of the Race Relations Act 1976 (now superseded by the Equality Act 2010). This means that they are fully protected by the anti-discrimination provisions in the Equality Act 2010.

5.6 The agreed definition of monitored hate crime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, adopted by criminal justice agencies in 2007, which covers all strands of hate crime (disability; gender identity; race, religion or belief; and sexual orientation) includes the following in relation to race:

‘A Hate Crime is any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person’s race or perceived race. Included subjects are: any racial group or ethnic background including countries within the United Kingdom and Gypsy and Traveller groups’

5.7 We are satisfied that the definition as it stands is adequate, but we know that this is not an end in itself.

Data and scale

5.8 In September 2011, the Association of Chief Police Officers published figures covering the five monitored hate crime strands recorded by the police in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2010. The figures show that there were 48,127 recorded hate crimes, with 39,311 recorded in relation to racist hate crime. However, data on race cannot be disaggregated to specifically identify hate crimes against Gypsies and Travellers.

- 5.9 As a victim perception-based crime, many hate incidents and crimes may go unreported, because victims may not necessarily associate what has happened to them to as having been targeted at them on the basis of a personal characteristic. Coupled with distrust in the police and authorities and the feeling that they will not be treated fairly, it is likely that Gypsy and Traveller communities will not always report hate crime when it happens to them. This makes it difficult to know the true extent of hate crime against Gypsies and Travellers.

Commitment 15

The Home Office will promote better recording of all hate crimes helping us to target our work more effectively and help the police to better focus resources.

Increasing reporting

- 5.10 Working with key voluntary sector partners, we want to improve the recording of all forms of hate crime, by building confidence in communities to encourage greater reporting. For example, by developing third party reporting centres, those people who are reluctant to report directly to the police can report hate crimes to separate organisations that can then forward details of incidents to the police for action as necessary.
- 5.11 We have already worked closely with the Association of Chief Police Officers to support their development of the *True Vision* website, which was launched on 1 February 2011 and allows victims of hate crime to report it electronically.

Commitment 16

The Association of Chief Police Officers will develop an information pack and self-reporting form specifically tailored for Gypsy and Traveller communities as part of its True Vision Website resource.

Working with external partners, the Association of Chief Police Officers will develop culturally suitable and accessible material for Gypsy and Traveller communities. This will aim to provide information about what hate crime is and how it can be reported. The material will take a rights-based approach aiming to send the message that victims have the right to expect a high standard of service.

Improving the response

- 5.12 Tackling hate crime forms part of a multi-agency response. The police, as a frontline service, have made strenuous efforts to understand and deal with

hate crime in recent years. This includes work to improve engagement between the police and Gypsy and Traveller communities.

- 5.13 However, we are not complacent and acknowledge that there is still further work to be done. We need to ensure that hate crime is identified as such in the first instance and distinguished from what is sometimes regarded as anti-social behaviour. This will help in signposting victims to appropriate support services and putting in place effective protection measures.
- 5.14 In 2005 the Association of Chief Police Officers issued a Hate Crime Manual as a working resource for all police forces in England, Wales and (Northern Ireland); in order to take into account the emerging issues relating to hate crime they will update their guidance to forces.

Commitment 17

The Association of Chief Police Officers will issue a refreshed Hate Crime Manual which will include specific guidance for police officers on working effectively with Gypsy and Traveller communities, to inspire confidence so they report hate crime and incidents, and to ensure they receive a fair, effective and proportionate police response when they do.

The Hate Crime Manual will be refreshed to take account of new legislation and changes to practice since it was published in 2005. This provides the opportunity to include specific guidance on a range of emerging issues for the police service as well as providing guidance on dealing with particular types of hate crime. A specific chapter providing guidance on working with Gypsy and Traveller communities will be included. The guidance will also include best practice advice on community engagement and 'third party' reporting schemes. It is being delivered with the co-operation of the Hate Crime Strategy Board (a cross-departmental officials group) and in consultation with Gypsy and Traveller community groups.

- 5.15 We also need to ensure that local partnerships and agencies are aware of their responsibilities and duties and the importance of working in partnership to support victims and tackle all forms of hate crime.

Commitment 18

The Home Office will collect and publish local examples of what works in preventing and tackling hate crime for Community Safety Partnerships. The guidance will include specific advice on working effectively and engaging with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Preventing hate crime against Gypsy and Traveller Communities

- 5.16 We are committed to preventing hate crime through education and ensuring that communities are aware of the damage it inflicts on those that experience it.
- 5.17 Almost every serious or violent offence motivated by hate will have been precipitated by an escalation of offending behaviour from lower-level incidents such as bullying and verbal abuse²⁶. Local communities need to take responsibility for challenging unacceptable behaviour when they witness it and reporting crimes when they occur, when it is right and safe for them to do so. The earlier we challenge prejudicial views, the more likely we are to prevent those views being acted upon through verbal or physical attacks.

²⁶ Paul Iganski *Hate Crime and the City*

Chapter 6

Improving interaction with the National Offender Management Service

- 6.1 The National Offender Management Service is committed to ensuring the provision of a fair service to all. The specific needs of Gypsy and Traveller prisoners have been considered by prison establishments for a number of years.
- 6.2 The available evidence on the experiences of Gypsy and Traveller groups identifies a number of factors that may affect Gypsies' and Travellers' experiences in prison and under probation supervision in the community.
- 6.3 *Power's* (2004) study of Irish Travellers, cited in a Ministry of Justice literature review in 2009²⁷, suggested, for example, that prison officers acted in a way that may be seen as discriminatory towards Irish Travellers and also highlighted potential difficulties for Gypsies and Travellers arising from sentencing and after-care systems largely designed for sedentary populations.
- 6.4 The Prison Service's Race Review, *Implementing Race Equality in Prisons: Five Years On* (2008, p.59), referred to a number of difficulties experienced by Gypsy and Traveller prisoners, such as:

"difficulties accessing services, including offender behaviour programmes, as the literacy level required was too high; derogatory and racist name calling primarily by prisoners, and by some staff, in two of the prisons visited; lack of confidence in the complaints system; and the lack of cultural awareness and understanding of staff. For example, Irish Travellers complained of being accused of intimidating or bullying prisoners and staff and they felt this was the result of officers misinterpreting their distinct accent and non-verbal communication style".

- 6.5 The recent report by the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain, *Voices Unheard: A Study of Irish Travellers in prison* also reported disadvantages experienced by Gypsy and Traveller prisoners. The report's recommendations focused on addressing perceived difficulties in gaining access to education, vocational

²⁷ Power, C. (2004). *Room to Roam: England's Irish Travellers*. Research Report published by consortium of Irish Traveller groups and supported by the Community Fund. Cited in Mason et al (2009). *Access to Justice: a review of existing evidence of the experiences of minority groups based on ethnicity, identity and sexuality*. Ministry of Justice Research Series 7/09.

training, interventions and discrimination relating to parole conditions and Home Detention Curfew.

- 6.6 It is possible that the negative perceptions reported in these studies may affect Gypsy and Traveller prisoners' interaction with staff they come into contact with in the criminal justice system. It could also affect some prisoners' willingness to identify as Gypsy or Traveller, which would have implications for service provision and the ability to proactively consider and address the issues that affect this group of prisoners and offer services in the most appropriate form.

Commitment 19

The National Offender Management Service will monitor the population of Gypsies and Travellers in prison and under probation supervision, to ensure access to activities is appropriate and meets the needs of Gypsies and Travellers through their rehabilitation.

- 6.7 Following the inclusion of 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' in the ethnicity categories of the 2011 Census, the prison information system, P-Nomis, has been amended and now has the facility to record and monitor Gypsy and Traveller prisoners. There are some concerns, however, that many Gypsy and Traveller prisoners may be reluctant to self-define as Gypsy or Traveller. Many prisons are now putting in place measures to increase confidence which over time is expected to encourage more prisoners from Gypsy and Traveller backgrounds to disclose their ethnicity. Best practice suggests Gypsy and Traveller prisoners can encourage other Gypsy and Traveller prisoners to engage and that this approach is often more successful than other mechanisms as peers are more likely to be trusted. Some prisons employ Gypsy and Traveller prisoners as representatives within their prisoner equality representative group.

Commitment 20

The National Offender Management Service will regularly review the good practice guidance provided to staff on equality and diversity to ensure information and cultural awareness of Gypsy and Traveller culture is incorporated and that it adequately addresses the needs of Gypsy and Traveller offenders.

- 6.8 A number of guidance resources are currently available for all staff on a range of equality and diversity issues, including those relevant to Gypsy and Traveller prisoners. This includes a Good Practice Guide produced by the crime reduction charity Nacro and a number of publications aimed at helping staff understand Gypsy and Traveller culture and history, the difficulties faced by this group both inside and outside prison, and to challenge common misconceptions.

- 6.9 Whilst a matter for individual prison establishments, the guidance also recommends that Gypsy and Traveller prisoner groups are facilitated to ensure Gypsies and Travellers are able to raise issues that affect them effectively and directly with prison managers.

Commitment 21

The National Offender Management Service will revise the equalities training provided to new entrant prison officers with an expectation that sessions on race equality will include Gypsy and Traveller issues and awareness.

- 6.10 Previous national race awareness campaigns across the National Offender Management Service have included Gypsy and Traveller role models alongside those from other ethnic backgrounds, to ensure awareness is raised of Gypsy and Traveller issues.
- 6.11 The Good Practice Guide recommends local awareness training on Gypsy and Traveller issues and work is underway to revise new entrant training courses which will include integrated training on Gypsy and Traveller issues and managing Gypsy and Traveller prisoners.

Commitment 22

The National Offender Management Service will introduce a cluster arrangement of prisons overseen by a Lead Governor who will have greater discretion to commission the offender learning and skills provision required locally to best meet the needs of the offenders they are managing.

- 6.12 Educational provision for offenders is funded by the Skills Funding Agency, through contracts with providers of further education, to deliver the Offenders Learning and Skills Service. Learning needs are assessed and addressed on an individual basis.
- 6.13 In May 2011 the Government published a review of offender learning, *Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation*. This review recommended, amongst other measures, a change to the arrangements for delivering learning, where the National Offender Management Service brings together into clusters those prisons that regularly transfer prisoners between them. This will deliver a system that is responsive to local needs and demands within an agreed governance framework and will allow particular learning needs to be met, whilst providing a consistent skills offer that supports continued participation during prisoners' progress through their sentences. Prison governors and their staff will have an essential role in ensuring that the skills provision is consistent with the prison's offender management strategy, the range of prisoners they will manage (including Gypsies and Travellers), and plans for

getting offenders into employment as part of its focus on reducing re-offending.

- 6.14 Also as a result of the review, work is in progress between the National Offender Management Service and the Skills Funding Agency to co-commission a new service from August 2012. The service specification calls for a new focus on assessing and addressing the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including the provision of additional learning support, personalised programmes and the use of specialist staff. Addressing low levels of literacy will feature highly within the curriculum. Gypsies and Travellers presenting low levels of literacy or difficulties engaging in learning will benefit from this service.
- 6.15 An additional tool to aiding offenders' learning is the new Virtual Campus, which is being introduced across the prison estate. This is an education platform that allows tailored provision for learners and with considerable graphical and interactive content is particularly useful for those learners with low literacy skills. It also allows for the continuity of learning from custody into the community, as it can be accessed from any PC in the community.

Chapter 7

Improving access to employment and financial services

Access to Department for Work and Pensions employment services

- 7.1 The Department for Work and Pensions is committed to giving personalised support to those who need it to secure employment.
- 7.2 Anecdotal and qualitative evidence from a number of studies indicates that historically Gypsies and Travellers have made little use of Jobcentre Plus work-related programmes and services, and may have a cultural bias against claiming out-of-work benefits to which they may be entitled. There is also evidence that changes in the economy may be leading Gypsies and Travellers to leave traditional occupations and engage more with Government services.²⁸
- 7.3 There is little specific evidence on the interaction of Gypsies and Travellers with the Department's employment services, and quantitative evidence on unemployment rates has not been collected. The Commission for Racial Equality Gypsies and Travellers Strategy paper in 2004²⁹ noted a lack of systematic data on Gypsy and Traveller employment. It does report anecdotal evidence indicating unemployment is high among Gypsies and Travellers who need training in practical skills as well as opportunities to obtain qualifications for skills they already have.
- 7.4 In response to this lack of evidence officials from the Department for Work and Pensions undertook internally commissioned 'Insight' work with Gypsies and Travellers to help gain greater understanding of the barriers the community faces in engaging with employment services. This work was supported by discussions with organisations such as Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange, York Travellers Trust, Irish Community Care Merseyside and Citizens Advice, a review of existing research, and a review of existing Departmental/Jobcentre Plus guidance.
- 7.5 The findings support our existing provision and current direction of travel. Whilst some Gypsies and Travellers felt that their individual needs were not

²⁸ For example: "Never [signed on] it's not in our culture", p. 117, *Roads to Success: Economic and Social Inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers*, ITMB, 2011

²⁹ Commission for Racial Equality, *Gypsies and Travellers, A Strategy for the CRE 2004-2007*, London: CRE, 2004.

taken account of, they noted that they felt most positive about their experiences with Jobcentre Plus employment support when they had been able to build a relationship with a single named adviser who could offer continuity of service.

- 7.6 Many Gypsies and Travellers leave the education system before the age of 16 with poor literacy and numeracy skills. In discussions we had with members of the community, most felt their poor literacy skills impacted on their understanding of the conditionality requirements of the Jobseeker's Allowance regime, as well as significantly disadvantaging them in seeking employment. They also felt they lacked qualifications and softer skills such as confidence and motivation that would help them in gaining employment.
- 7.7 Jobcentre Plus has now moved to a model of support where claimants are assigned to one Adviser for the duration of their claim. In addition the Work Programme (introduced in June 2011) allows providers the flexibility to innovate and develop support tailored to the needs of the individual. We are also committed to simplifying the benefits system and will be introducing the Universal Credit in 2013.
- 7.8 Jobseeker's Allowance claimants (who are required to actively seek and be available for work) can be mandated to undertake activity to address an identified skills need which will aid their movement into work. The skills training available includes vocational skills, basic skills and softer skills such as confidence and motivation.

Commitment 23

The Department for Work and Pensions will provide personalised support to Gypsies and Travellers via the Work Programme and where needed, Gypsies and Travellers will have access to appropriate skills support.

- 7.9 There is a lack of data within Government on the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers who are in employment or claiming out-of-work benefits. The Department for Work and Pensions has not routinely collated information identifying individuals as belonging to the Gypsy and Traveller community. This has made it difficult to assess the degree of engagement with Gypsy and Traveller claimants and the success or level of interventions. Gypsies and Travellers were included as an ethnic category in the 2011 Census for the first time and they are also now included as a category in the Labour Force Survey. The introduction of Universal Credit presents an opportunity to update the Department's monitoring systems to include Gypsies and Travellers.

Commitment 24

The Department for Work and Pensions will include Gypsies and Travellers as a monitoring category in our IT, processing and management information systems with changes being made for the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013.

- 7.10 Findings from the work undertaken by the Department indicated that in general Gypsies and Travellers did not feel they were individually discriminated against by Jobcentre Plus because they were Gypsies and Travellers. However, there still exists a real fear of possible discrimination and a belief that staff working with them may not always be sensitive to their culture.
- 7.11 Gypsies and Travellers are distinct ethnic groups. A review of equality and diversity training material for staff indicates that this has not always been made clear.

Commitment 25

The Department for Work and Pensions will improve internal guidance and staff awareness of Gypsies and Travellers as ethnic groups. We will work to identify informative case studies and instances of best practice and review and promote the existing guidance on working with Gypsies and Travellers. We will also work with Human Resources colleagues to update Diversity guidance and training materials on race to include mention of Gypsies and Travellers.

- 7.12 The Ethnic Minority Advisory Group is an independent body (supported by the Department for Work and Pensions) whose main focus is to help reduce the gap between the ethnic minority employment rate and the employment rate for the working age population as a whole. It provides advice to Government on issues related to the disadvantage individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds face in relation to the labour market.
- 7.13 Historically Gypsies and Travellers have not been included within the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group's remit, which focuses on minorities whose ethnicity is 'visible'. Work conducted by the Department supports the views of key external partners that Gypsies and Travellers can often be visually or culturally identifiable as distinct from the 'settled' community and may suffer discrimination as a result.

Commitment 26

The Department for Work and Pensions consulted with the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group on the inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers. The Ethnic Minority Advisory Group agreed that Gypsies and Travellers should be represented and, following an application process, the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain now represent Gypsies and Travellers on the advisory group.

Access to financial products and services

- 7.14 Studies have reported that some Gypsies and Travellers face difficulties accessing financial products and services; for example, difficulties providing suitable ID (identification documents) and difficulties providing evidence of a stable address which can be a barrier to opening a bank account. Gypsies and Travellers have also reported concerns that financial services would be hostile towards them.³⁰
- 7.15 A recent positive development in widening the financial services market for Gypsies and Travellers has been the establishment of a home and contents insurance policy directly targeting Gypsies and Travellers living on authorised traveller sites. Meanwhile, the Department for Work and Pensions has been working across Government to ensure communities are aware of the services credit unions offer.
- 7.16 To help clarify ID requirements, the Financial Inclusion Team at the Department for Work and Pensions worked with the banking industry to arrange a comprehensive list of what ID is needed to open a range of basic bank accounts. This is now available on the Money Advice Service website.
- 7.17 Transact (a financial inclusion organisation) has also been involved in discussions with the Department for Communities and Local Government and Gypsy and Traveller representative groups about financial inclusion issues and we will continue to work with them. The British Bankers Association and the Association of British Insurers have both agreed to work with Gypsy and Traveller community groups if the community groups can set out examples of the specific barriers faced in accessing financial products and services.

Commitment 27

The Government will encourage measures to improve the financial inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers. The Department for Work and Pensions will continue to work across Government to ensure communities are aware of the services that credit unions offer.

³⁰ Irish Traveller Movement in Britain; *Roads to Success*,(2010), p52; p108

Chapter 8

Improving engagement with service providers

- 8.1 Some Gypsies and Travellers are unable or unwilling to engage with public services, contributing to the poor outcomes highlighted in this report. In turn some services are not appropriately equipped to engage with Gypsies and Travellers and do not always make efforts to reach out to them.
- 8.2 There are examples of successful engagement between service providers and Gypsies and Travellers. We want service providers, Gypsies and Travellers and their representative groups to be able to easily access this good practice, learn from it and share their own experiences.

Commitment 28

The Department for Communities and Local Government will promote examples of good engagement and good practice on the Gypsy and Traveller Knowledge Network which service providers and others are welcome to join through the Knowledge Hub website. This will provide a space in which service providers, Gypsies and Travellers and others can discuss good practice and learn about what works across the range of issues covered in this report.

- 8.3 You can join the Gypsy and Traveller Knowledge Network at:

knowledgehub.local.gov.uk

Further comments and contributions regarding this report can be addressed to:

gtnwg@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Summary of commitments

1. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are specifically highlighted as a vulnerable group in the revised Ofsted framework.

Department for Education

2. We will pilot a Virtual Head Teacher for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in a small number of local authorities. Funding will be allocated to each authority for the appointment of a senior dedicated individual to champion the interests of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils across the authority and to monitor and respond to issues of low attainment and attendance.

Department for Education

3. To tackle poor attendance at school, we intend to look again at the impact of legislation that under certain circumstances protects mobile Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families from prosecution for their children's non-attendance at school. This will be done in parallel with a review of statutory guidance.

Department for Education

4. In response to the unacceptably high levels of exclusion among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, we will take steps to assess the impact of school-based commissioning, alternative provision and early intervention on the most vulnerable pupil groups.

Department for Education

5. The results of an Ofsted survey on prejudiced-based bullying, which will pick up bullying of minority pupils, will be published next year.

Department for Education

6. We will collect and publish brief case studies from the highest performing schools for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils to find out from them what lies behind their success.

Department for Education

7. We will work with the National Inclusion Health Board, the NHS, local government and others to identify what more must be done to include the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the commissioning of health services.

Department of Health

8. We will explore how health and wellbeing boards can be supported to ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers with the worst health outcomes are better reflected in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies.

Department of Health

9. We will work with the UCL Institute of Health Equity and the Inclusion Health working groups to identify gaps in data and research, and look to identify the specific interventions that produce positive health outcomes.

Department of Health

10. We will work with the Inclusion Health working groups to identify what more needs to be done to improve maternal health, reduce infant mortality and increase immunisation rates.

Department of Health

11. We will work with the Inclusion Health Board to embed the Inclusion Health programme in training for all health professionals with the aim of developing a strong, stable and capable workforce, that can drive change and make a difference to the lives and health outcomes of the most vulnerable.

Department of Health

12. We will help Gypsy and Traveller representative groups showcase small private sites that are well presented and maintained.

Department for Communities and Local Government

13. The Government will continue to promote improved health outcomes for travellers through the planning system.

Department for Communities and Local Government

14. We have published a new cross-Government hate crime action plan, setting out our vision and approach for tackling hate crime over the remainder of this Parliament.

Home Office

15. We will promote better recording of all hate crimes. Helping us to target our work more effectively and help the police to better focus resources.

Home Office

16. The Association of Chief Police Officers will develop an information pack and self-reporting form specifically tailored for Gypsy and Traveller communities as part of its True Vision Website resource.

Home Office

17. The Association of Chief Police Officers will issue a refreshed Hate Crime Manual which will include specific guidance for police officers on working effectively with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Association of Chief Police Officers

18. We will collect and publish local examples of what works in preventing and tackling hate crime for Community Safety Partnerships.

Home Office

19. The National Offender Management Service will monitor the population of Gypsies and Travellers in prison and under probation supervision, to ensure access to activities is appropriate and meets the needs of Gypsies and Travellers through their rehabilitation.

Ministry of Justice

20. The National Offender Management Service will regularly review the good practice guidance provided to staff on equality and diversity to ensure information and cultural awareness of Gypsy and Traveller culture is incorporated and adequately addresses the needs of Gypsy and Traveller offenders.

Ministry of Justice

21. The National Offender Management Service will revise the equalities training provided to new entrant prison officers with an expectation that sessions on race equality will include Gypsy and Traveller issues and awareness.

Ministry of Justice

22. The National Offender Management Service will introduce a cluster arrangement of prisons overseen by a Lead Governor who will have greater discretion to commission the offender learning and skills provision required locally to best meet the needs of the offenders they are managing.

Ministry of Justice

23. We will provide personalised support to Gypsies and Travellers via the Work Programme and where needed, Gypsies and Travellers will have access to appropriate skills support.

Department for Work and Pensions

24. We will include Gypsies and Travellers as a monitoring category in our IT, processing and management information systems with changes being made for the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013.

Department for Work and Pensions

25. We will improve internal guidance and staff awareness of Gypsies and Travellers as an ethnic group.

Department for Work and Pensions

26. Gypsies and Travellers are now represented on the Department for Work and Pensions' Ethnic Minority Advisory Group.

Department for Work and Pensions

27. We will encourage measures to improve financial inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers. The Department for Work and Pensions will continue to work across Government to ensure communities are aware of the services that credit unions offer.

Department for Communities and Local Government / Department for Work and Pensions

28. We will promote examples of good engagement between service providers and Gypsies and Traveller and other good practice through the Knowledge Hub website.

Department for Communities and Local Government