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Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families - A Research Report
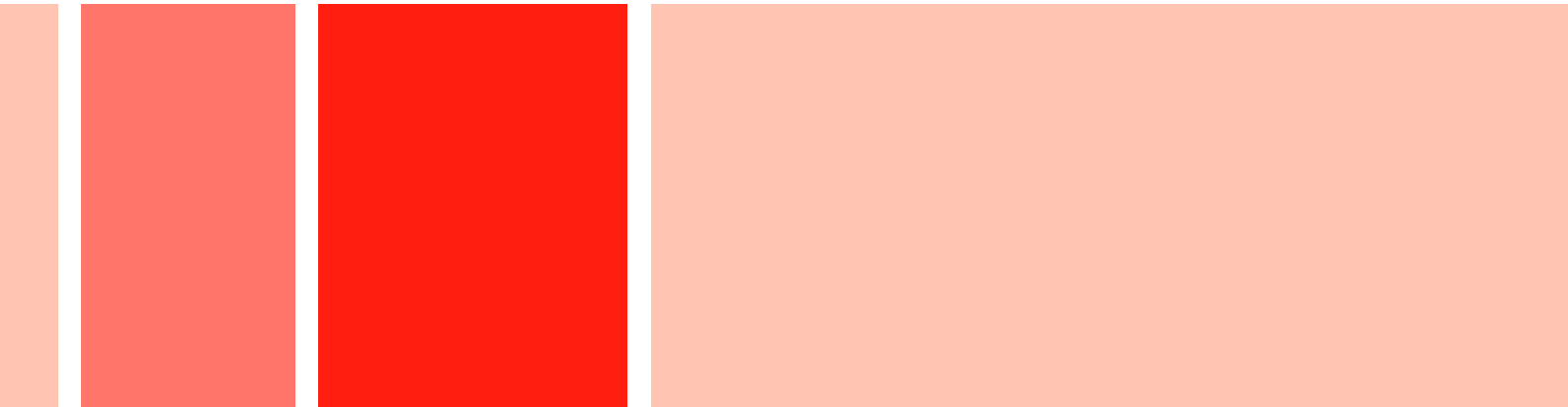
Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Gypsy and Traveller Families - A Research Report

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Glossary of Terms

CSI	-	Core Subjects Indicator (English, Maths and Science)
ESW	-	Education Social Worker
EWO	-	Education Welfare Officer
FPI	-	Foundation Phase Indicator
GRT	-	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
LA	-	Local Authority
NPD	-	National Pupil Database
PLASC	-	Pupil Level Annual Schools Census
SEN	-	Special Educational Needs
Site	-	An area of land used for Gypsy and Traveller Caravans. Authorised sites have planning permission, while unauthorised sites do not
TES	-	Traveller Education Service

1. Introduction

1.1.   Gypsy and Travellers are considered one of the most marginalised and socially excluded groups in England and Wales (Estyn, 2011). Consequently, Gypsy and Travellers are likely to experience poor outcomes including low qualifications, high levels of unemployment, inadequate access to housing and poor health (Wilkin et al., 2009; Power, 2004; Lawrence, 2005). Historically, a lack of cultural recognition and public understanding has further perpetuated the stigmatisation and segregation of this group (Welsh Government, 2008a).

1.2.   Education is a subject of debate within Travelling communities and many Gypsy and Traveller young people leave school before the end of statutory school education. The latest Census data showed that over 60% of Gypsy and Travellers aged over 16 had no qualifications-nearly three times higher than the rest of the population (23%) (ONS,2014). In Wales, Gypsy and Traveller pupils are the lowest achieving group. For example, in 2013 only 12.3% of Gypsy/Gypsy Roma pupils achieved at the level 2 threshold[1] compared with 51.5% of all pupils (Welsh Government, 2013a).

1.3.   In 2011/2012 Gypsy and Traveller pupils had the highest rates of absenteeism in both Primary and Secondary school (Welsh Government, 2013a). This is significant, as high levels of absence and low levels of attainment are linked. Poor levels of attendance correspond to a distinct set of barriers that Gypsy and Traveller pupils encounter while at school (Welsh Government, 2008a).

Research aims

1.4.   The research aimed to identify what works in engaging Gypsy and Traveller families in education with a specific focus on attainment,

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[1] This included a GCSE grade A*-C in English and Maths at the end of Key Stage 4.

attendance, transition and retention. The objective was to provide a comprehensive and evidence based account of good practice by drawing on the experiences of Traveller Education Service (TES) workers. This included capturing a picture of Local Authority (LA) provision for Gypsy and Travellers across Wales. The research intended to offer a deeper insight into the complexities associated with engaging with families to inform other key service providers, practitioners and policy makers. The following research questions were addressed:

i. What is the nature of LA provision for Gypsy and Traveller education across Wales?

ii. What key practices facilitate engagement?

iii. How do these key practices work in engaging Gypsy and Traveller families in education?

Definitions

1.5.   The term Gypsy and Traveller includes a diverse range of communities with distinct cultures and heritage. Official terminology used to define different groups of Gypsy Travellers may only partially describe the identity of these groups. Research suggests that for Gypsy Travellers, self-ascription is subjective and personal (Levinson, 2000). For example, an individual who rarely travels and resides in bricks and mortar accommodation may continue to self-identify as a Traveller. Many Gypsy Travellers chose not to self-ascribe as Gypsy Travellers, preferring anonymity.

1.6.   Whilst acknowledging these distinctions, for the sake of clarity and consistency the term 'Gypsy and Traveller' used in this report refers to a range of groups, including:

- Traveller: i) Traveller of Irish Heritage, ii) 'New' Traveller, iii) Occupational Traveller, iv) Other Traveller
- Gypsy: i) Gypsy/Roma, ii) British Gypsy/Gypsy Roma, iii) Gypsy/Gypsy Roma from Other Countries, iv) Other Gypsy/Gypsy

Roma

1.7. All of the groups listed above are represented within Wales (Welsh Government, 2008a). Although certain families still lead nomadic lifestyles, anecdotal evidence suggests that the Gypsy and Traveller population in Wales has become increasingly settled– with fewer families travelling frequently and more residing in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Policy context in Wales

1.8. In 2008, the Welsh Government issued 'Moving Forward-Gypsy and Traveller Education' to help LAs inform and improve their provision for Gypsy and Traveller pupils. It highlighted the importance of working with families, supporting Gypsy and Travellers in their transition to Secondary school and facilitating the continuity of learning. In 2011 Estyn reported that the majority of LAs used this guidance to some extent to "inform their policy and to enhance their provision" (Estyn, 2011:2).

1.9. In 2011, the Welsh Government issued 'Travelling to a Better Future' - a Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan' (Welsh Government, 2011a). The framework identified key objectives, for the improved outcomes of Gypsy and Traveller learners; including attendance and retention.

1.10. The Welsh Government awards an annual grant (£1.1m in 2014-15) to LAs for the education of Gypsy and Traveller learners (Welsh Government, 2014b). The grant is available to support pupils aged 3 to 18 years and is intended to improve the educational opportunities and standards for Gypsy and Travellers. The grant covers 75% of programme costs, and can also be used for the provision of additional tuition and supporting transition to Secondary school. In 2014-15, 19 LAs are in receipt of this grant.

1.11. The Welsh Government also chairs an All Wales Forum of Gypsy and Traveller Education Co-ordinators. This provides LA practitioners with the opportunity to discuss issues, share good practice and to influence policy development (Welsh Government, 2011a).

1.12. In 2014, the Welsh Government launched a web based resource 'Travelling Together' to promote Gypsy and Traveller culture and heritage within the national curriculum[2]. It provides in-depth guidance for schools by drawing together resources produced by the Traveller Education Services across Wales and specialised websites for the Gypsy and Traveller community. The resource was developed to support achievement, provide a culturally affirming curriculum, encourage transition and reduce the marginalisation of Gypsy and Traveller pupils (Welsh Government, 2014c).

Structure of report

1.13. This report brings together information on transition, retention and re-engagement from a range of methods and sources. The analysis provides accounts of practices deemed as successful in engaging Gypsy and Traveller families. Good practice examples are used to illuminate key themes throughout.

1.14. The rest of the report is structured as follows:
Chapter 2: is the evidence review, which includes data on population characteristics and the attainment and attendance of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. It examines the substantive issues raised in the wider literature around trust, attitudes and perceptions, transition and retention.
Chapter 3: presents the findings of a survey of LAs who currently claim the annual Gypsy and Traveller education grant. It highlights evidence of multi-agency working, provision and factors cited as important for

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[2] http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/travelling-together/?lang=en

engagement.

Chapters 4 to 6: document the key findings from the qualitative research on the themes of engaging families, transition and promoting retention. Each chapter looks at the barriers for Gypsy and Traveller pupils then examines practice.

Chapter 7: presents conclusions and implications for future policy and practice.

Details on the methodology and research tools used can be found in the appendices.

2. Evidence Review

Introduction

2.1. Despite some progress in Gypsy and Traveller education, national trends indicate that attendance and achievement of Gypsy Traveller pupils is still unacceptably low. The purpose of this section is to bring together the latest available data on the population characteristics, attainment and the attendance of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. The second section of this evidence review draws together the existing literature on attitudes and perceptions, transition and retention. This has a dual purpose - to communicate the context of the research to a wider audience and to ensure that the primary research builds upon what is already known about these issues.

2.2. This review suggests the need for empirical research from the perspective of the practitioners who work with Gypsy and Traveller families on the ground. This research has focussed on providing good practice examples of engagement and was not intended to provide an in-depth account of what works in improving the educational outcomes of Gypsy and Travellers.

Population Characteristics

Figures and estimates

2.3. The precise number of Gypsy and Travellers currently resident in Wales is not known. This is largely due to the mobility of the population and the reluctance of some Gypsy and Travellers to disclose their ethnic status (Welsh Government, 2008a). Subsequently, data on the population is limited in its accuracy and reliability. The three official sources that attempt to gauge the population are:

- The 2011 Census (unit: households)
- The Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count (unit: caravans and pitches)
- The Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (unit: Pupils)

2.4. The published data only provides partial and limited 'snapshot' descriptions of the Gypsy and Traveller population in Wales. The 2011 Census estimated that in 2011 2,785 Gypsy/Traveller/Irish Traveller persons resided across Wales – accounting for less than 1% of the total population (ONS, 2011), see figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Map of the Gypsy and Traveller population in Wales (2011)
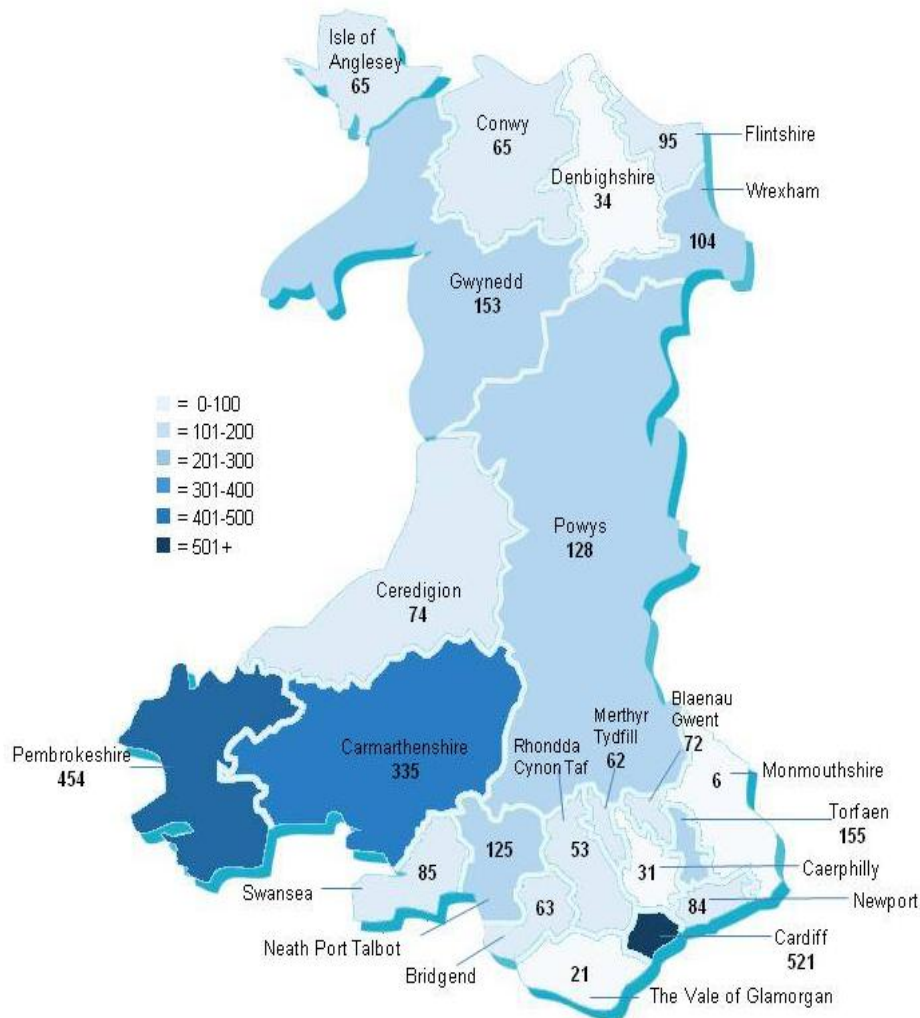
Source: The 2011 Census (ONS, 2011)

2.5. The Welsh Government's bi-annual Gypsy and Caravan Count, from July 2006 to January 2014, shows that the number of Caravans recorded on both authorised and non-authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites has fluctuated.

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Number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils

2.6. According to PLASC, in 2013, there were 861 Gypsy and Traveller pupils registered in Primary, Secondary and Special schools in Wales. This is over a third greater than the total number of pupils recorded in 2010 (616). In addition, there are more Gypsy/Roma pupils in schools than Travellers of Irish heritage.

Figure 2: The number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils over the age of 5 registered in Primary, Secondary and Special schools from 2010-2013
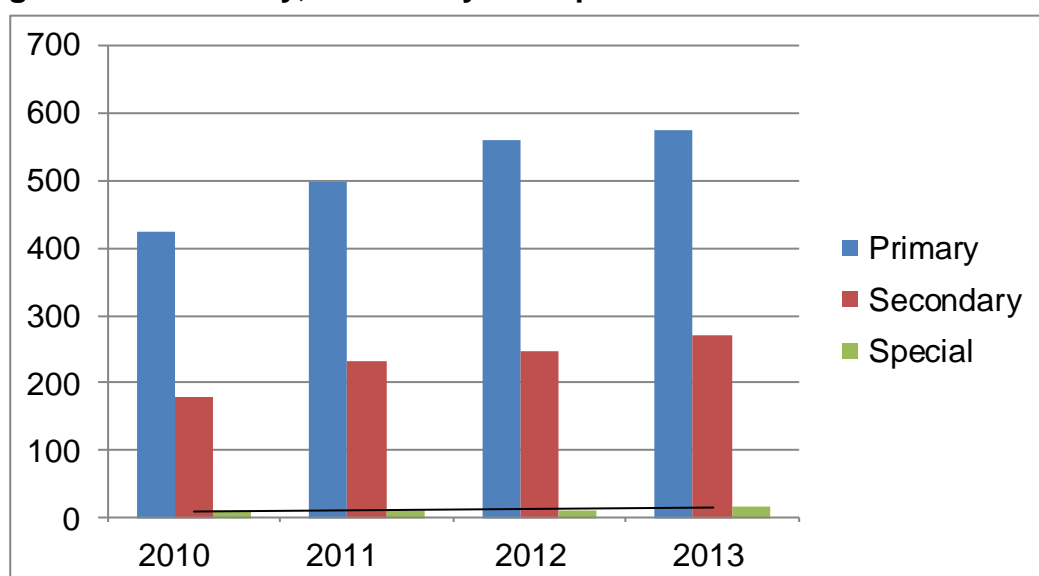
Source: 'The Schools Census Results' (Welsh Government, 2010c; 2011d; 2012c; 2013d).

Table 1: The number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils registered in Primary, Secondary and Special schools over the age of 5 (2013)

	Primary	Secondary	Special
Traveller of Irish Heritage	240	94	11
Gypsy/ Roma	334	176	6
Total pupils= 861			

Source: 'The Schools Census Results' (Welsh Government, 2013d)

Additional sources of data

2.7. In addition to PLASC figures, LAs supply data on the number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in their area when applying for the Gypsy and Traveller education grant. The numbers provided for the grant consistently far exceed those reported in PLASC. This higher number is perceived to be a combination of TES staff having better intelligence

about the communities they support and the reluctance of some parents to disclose their ethnicity on official documentation. This affects the capacity to monitor ethnic groups robustly (Padfield, 2005; Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008).

Attainment

2.8. Gypsy and Travellers persist as the poorest achieving ethnic group in Wales (Welsh Government 2014a). Due very small numbers of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in schools, the data used in this section is a combined three-year average for 2011, 2012 and 2013. Aggregating the data increased the size of groups - enabling for more robust conclusions to be drawn.

2.9. The data from 2011-2013 indicated that 33% of Travellers and 50% of Gypsy/Gypsy Roma pupils achieved the Foundation Phase Indicator - significantly less than the Welsh average of 82% (Welsh Government, 2014a).

2.10. At Key Stage 2, the number of Gypsy/Gypsy Roma pupils achieving the Core Subject Indicator (CSI), was 44%, compared to 82% of all pupils. There is a trend of decreasing achievement through each Key Stage.

2.11. At Key Stage 4, just 9% of Gypsy/Gypsy Roma pupils achieved the CSI, compared to 50% of all pupils. There is no published data available for Travellers beyond KS4, as the cohort is too small. However, the data for Gypsy/Gypsy Roma pupils show a significant decline in attainment (all data from Welsh Government, 2014a).

Figure 3: The number of Gypsy/Gypsy Roma pupils achieving the FPI and CSI from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 (aggregated 2011-2013).
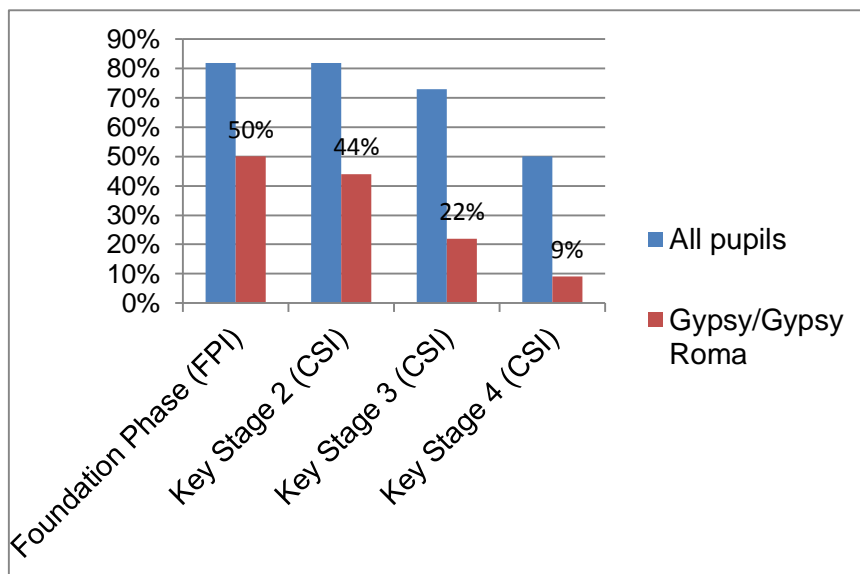
Source: PLASC & the Pupils' Attendance Record Data (Welsh Government, 2014a)

Attendance

2.12. On average, Gypsy and Travellers had the highest levels of persistent absence between 2011-2012 (both authorised and unauthorised absence) (Welsh Government, 2013a).These levels increased between Primary and Secondary school (Welsh Government, 2013a). For example, 45.3% of Travellers were recorded as persistent absentees at Primary school, which increased to 60% at Secondary. This is considerably higher than the 7.2% rate of all pupils.Gypsy/Gypsy Roma pupils have lower rates of absenteeism in comparison to Travellers at Secondary school (Welsh Government, 2013a).

2.13. There is a correlation between attendance and attainment. Pupils with the lowest rates of attendance demonstrate the highest rates of underachievement (Welsh Government, 2014a). It is apparent that improving school attendance is of vital importance to Gypsy and Traveller attainment levels.

2.14. The following sections identify the barriers towards school attendance from the wider literature, with a specific focus on transition and retention from Primary to Secondary school. The most significant barriers are described and illustrated with empirical research.

Literature Review

Primary Education

2.15. Overall, studies indicate that the attitudes of Gypsy and Traveller parents and pupils towards Primary education are predominantly positive (Derrington and Kendall, 2003; 2007a; 2007b; Hester, 2004; Wilkin et al., 2009). Gypsy and Traveller parents expressed a desire for their children to obtain a basic level of numeracy and literacy (Welsh Government, 2008a). Government documents indicate the importance of:

- Establishing relationships with Gypsy and Traveller families in early phases of education (Wilkin et al, 2010a)
- A positive ethos in Primary schools (Estyn, 2011)
- An enriching and inclusive curriculum that embraces diversity (Welsh Government, 2008a and 2011a).

Gaining the trust of families

2.16. Studies have found that Traveller Education Services (TES) play a vital role in establishing positive relationships with the Gypsy and Traveller community. Crucially, staff often act as a 'gateway' and/or as 'brokers' between parents, pupils and school (Bhopal et al.,2000). However, gaining the trust of the entire community is a lengthy and complex process. For example, Myers et al., (2010) found that for TES practitioners, often gaining the first foothold into accessing communities was difficult. However, once trust was established with families, practitioners were accepted by the entire community. Myers et al.,

(2010) argued this required TES staff to act as a "friendly, familiar and non-judgmental 'gateway' between parents and school" (p.539).

2.17. Moreover, in their research across six schools in England, Bhopal et al., (2000) found that the role of the TES in establishing relationships between parents and schools was crucial for securing access to school and providing practical advice and support to families. The kinds of relationships that TES staff shared with families took a number of years to develop.

2.18. Research from the National Federation for Educational Research on training provision for Gypsy and Travellers in England (which included 20 LA interviews and 6 case study visits), reported that the staff working with these communities needed to have certain skills to successfully engage families. Practitioners were required to have good communication skills, empathy, reflectiveness, resilience and 'holding a balanced and objective' viewpoint. Acting mindfully and reflecting on practice was central to building effective relationships with Gypsy and Traveller communities (NFER, 2008).

2.19. Notably few studies comprehensively explained how practitioners practically approached and established these relationships with Gypsy and Traveller families and the community. For instance, although the research evidence described 'gaining trust' as a longstanding and complex process, it offered little guidance on how to practically gain and maintain trust with communities.

Transition to Secondary

2.20. There are fewer Gypsy and Traveller pupils registered in Secondary schools than Primary schools. Towards the end of Primary when parents begin to consider transfer to Secondary school was a period of particular uncertainty for Gypsy and Traveller parents (Padfield and Jordan, 2004). This was connected to distinct attitudes, values and expectations held towards Secondary school (Warrington, 2006).

Cultural values

2.21. Gypsies and Travellers are a heterogeneous and fluid body of communities who possess multiple identities (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008). These communities subscribe to particular lifestyles and hold a number of distinct cultural, religious and moral beliefs (Welsh Government, 2011a). The shared cultural characteristics among Gypsy Travellers include a strong commitment to the family unit, distinct familial and gender roles and sense of pride in their cultural identity (Welsh Government, 2008a).

2.22. Within the Gypsy and Traveller community, children are considered adults at an early age (Myers et al, 2010). Gypsy and Traveller men are expected to seek employment while young women assume domestic roles within the home (Derrington and Kendall, 2007b). Despite this newly found independence, parents remain protective of their children. This 'coming of age' corresponds with a perceived vulnerability to the culture of the non-traveller community (Derrington, 2007; Myers et al, 2010). This can add complexity for practitioners supporting Gypsy and Travellers. For example, Myers et al.,(2010) found that TES practitioners often feel caught between two competing value systems and expectations. It requires careful negotiation between appreciating the duality of freedom and vulnerability held in the contradictory attitudes of parents (Myers et al, 2010).

2.23. The cultural values of Gypsy and Traveller families intersect with their attitudes, values and perceptions towards the value of Secondary education (Derrington and Kendall, 2003). The cultural values of the community can therefore form part of the barriers towards transfer to Secondary school. Sometimes, these perceptions are rooted in parents own negative and/or limited experiences of Secondary school (Bhopal, 2004).

Parental attitudes towards school

2.24. Myers et al (2010) found that some parents felt that to be educated, simply meant being able to read and write. Thus, many felt that there was no real benefit to their children being educated beyond Primary school. Instead, being educated around the home and being taught practical skills was viewed as more relevant and important to communities than attending Secondary school.

2.25. However, some studies indicated that parental attitudes towards school could be positive (Wilkin et al.,2009). Particularly in times of social and economic change, some parents recognised the increasing need for their children to achieve qualifications - despite their own limited experiences of school (Bhopal, 2004).

2.26. However, such positivity is often hindered by anxiety related to the environment of Secondary school; including concerns about sex, relationships, drugs and alcohol. Parents feared their children would be subject to bullying and racism in school. Some parents feared that by being in contact or 'mixing' with the settled community in school, their children would lose their cultural identity (Bowers, 2004). These anxieties would often take priority over educational aspirations (Derrington and Kendall, 2003; 2004). Studies indicated these kinds of parental attitudes often acted as barrier towards transition to Secondary school and retention (Derrington and Kendall, 2007b). Often, parental attitudes towards school had been passed down to their children (Jordan, 2001: Reynolds et al., 2003, Padfield, 2005 cited in Wilkin et al, 2009).

Best practice

2.27. Based on their case study research in England, Wilken et al., (2010) identified a range of 'constructive conditions' within schools that

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impacted 'positively on educational outcomes'. Some practices which promoted effective transfer to Secondary school included:

- Broadening outreach to include families i.e. family learning to counter negative parental experiences of school
- Practical assistance for pupils i.e. providing school uniforms, offering proactive support to parents in the school admission process
- Providing work-related/vocational opportunities within the curriculum
- Ongoing liaison between Primary and Secondary schools; and
- Partnerships between the TES and schools.

Re-assuring Gypsy and Traveller parents

2.28. In relation to the anxieties parents faced regarding transfer, Wilkin et al., (2010:1 & 56) identified two key factors which helped to re-assure and increase trust. These included:i) social links - i.e. knowing someone at the same school and ii) parental involvement with school; via meetings, parents evenings and school visits. However, parents would only consider visiting a school if they knew that they would feel welcomed (Wilkin et al., 2010). Thus the overall ethos, the efforts of teaching staff in combination with involvement in the transition process were important for effective transfer.

2.29. The research reviewed has highlighted the practices that help to promote engagement and effective transfer, but this has predominately focussed on the role of schools. Substantially less is known about activities undertaken by the TES during transition.

Supportive role of the TES

2.30. Bhopal et al., (2000) found that parents' perceptions of Secondary school were connected to the relationship they had with the TES:

> *"Many felt the TES teacher's role was vital in securing links and positive relationships with the school as well as encouraging the child to attend school" (p.56).*

This in turn strengthened the trust and confidence that parents felt towards Secondary school.

2.31. Effective liaison between schools, involving the TES and Education Welfare Officers was crucial for effectively monitoring and improving Secondary school attendance (Bhopal et al., 2000:28).This holistic model of support included regular verbal contact with parents. Underpinning success was the flexibility adopted by schools (Bhopal et al., 2000).

2.32. If the role of the TES is as pivotal as the research evidence suggests, an up-to-date understanding of how and why the activities of the TES promote engagement in this way is needed. Crucially, this will help to construct a more holistic understanding of what works in engaging Gypsy and Traveller families in education.

Retention

2.33. Maintaining levels of attendance throughout Secondary school is challenging for the majority of Gypsy and Traveller pupils (Danaher et al., 2007). The barriers towards retention typically centre on experiences within Secondary school, including:

- *Curriculum-* a lack of vocational and work based opportunities (Crozier at el., 2009)
- *Bullying-* including racism connected to fighting (particularly among boys) (Derrington, 2007)
- *Cultural understanding-* a understanding and knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller culture among school staff (Crozier et al, 2009)
- *Low expectations-* pupils often assigned to lower streams or SEN classes without appropriate assessment (Bhopal et al., 2000)
- *Poor teacher-pupil relationships* (Derrington, 2007)
- *Mobility* – linked to travelling patterns
- *Weak home-school relations -* discontinuity of learning and underachievement (Derrington and Kendall, 2003)

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- *Social exclusion and isolation* (Lloyd et al, 2008; Derrington, 2007).

2.34. The consequences of these experiences were connected to cultural values, perceptions and attitudes towards Secondary school held by Gypsy and Traveller families, often resulting in behavioural issues, non-attendance, school exclusion and/or withdrawal from school (Wilkin et al., 2010a). There is also a growing trend towards Elective Home Education (EHE) within the Gypsy and Traveller community (Wilkin at el., 2009).

Pupils' attitudes and expectations towards school

2.35. The literature suggests a close connection between pupil and parental attitudes and expectations towards school, education and learning. Derrington and Kendall's (2003, 2004, 2007a) research found that younger Traveller children express positive attitudes and expectations towards learning and school (see also: Reynolds et al., 2003; Bowers, 2004). However, as they progress to Secondary school, often these attitudes changed (Padfield, 2005).

Pupil experiences of school

2.36. The shift towards viewing school negatively was connected to perceptions that Gypsy and Travellers gained while at Secondary school including:

- The belief that teachers lacked an understanding and appreciation of the Gypsy and Traveller culture (Derrington and Kendall, 2004; Bowers, 2004);
- The lack of staff action and support when issues of racism and/or bullying occurred in school (Derrington, 2005, Lloyd et al., 1999);
- The perception of Secondary school as a scary and risky place; particularly when pupils had attended a smaller Primary school where they held strong ties to staff and peers (Derrington, 2005).

2.37. These attitudes and experiences are cumulative and can have a negative effect upon school attendance (Marks, 2006 cited in Wilkin et al., 2009:5).

Racism and bullying

2.38. Experiences of bullying which affected previous generations can make the prospect of engaging with Secondary school difficult for both children and parents and there is a suggestion that Gypsy Travellers possess a heightened sensitivity towards racism (Myers et al., 2010).

2.39. Bhopal (2011) found that Gypsy Travellers experience racism differently to other non-White minority ethnic groups which was related to seeing themselves as'outsiders' within school. Bhopal suggests that this form of 'white racism' is not as well recognised or understood in comparison to non-White minority racism. Subsequently, in response to these experiences, Gypsy and Traveller pupils may hide or suppress their identity as a guard against the prejudice that they face in school. This, in turn, increases the risk of social isolation (Lloyd and McCluskey, 2008; Warrington, 2006).

2.40. Alternatively, Lloyd et al's., (1999) study of Scottish Travellers found that Gypsy Traveller pupils usually responded aggressively to racist bullying. This brought them in to direct conflict with teachers and led to exclusion. Derrington's (2007) research found that Gypsy Travellers dropping out of Secondary school was preceded by a breakdown in relationships with teachers. This illustrates the interconnection between barriers and their cumulative effects upon retention.

Towards improving attendance

2.41. Encouraging attendance was key to engagement and being able to identify learning needs through baseline assessments (often missed due to travelling). Early pre-school engagement meant that children were more likely to make greater academic progress throughout Primary

school (Wilkin et al., 2009). However, one study found that disputes with teachers were connected to non-attendance (Lloyd et al., 1999; Derrington and Kendall, 2004).

2.42. Establishing good social relationships with both Gypsy and Travellers as well as non-travelling peers in school was important for retention. For example, one study found those who dropped out of Secondary school reported less diverse and secure social relationships than those who had stayed on (Derrington, 2007: 361).

2.43. In addition, secure social links between Traveller and non-Traveller pupils in school facilitated retention. One study found that regular school attendance positively influenced social relationships. In contrast, poor school attendance negatively impacted upon social relationships (Derrington, 2007).

Best Practice

2.44. Engaging Gypsy and Travellers in education and promoting retention encompasses multi-dimensional practice. Wilkin et al., (2009) illustrate a variety of practices important for engagement in schools:

Best Practice
'Facilitating engagement and retention'
Wilkin et al., 2009: p1-5

Access and Inclusion

Overcoming barriers to access and inclusion in school was crucial for engagement and retention. This included:

  ➢ Encouraging Gypsy and Traveller pupils to make friends with their non-traveller peers
  ➢ Providing work-related/vocational opportunities within the curriculum
  ➢ A responsive approach to the needs of Gypsy and Traveller learners

Recognition and Respect

Respect as a two way process whereby schools understood and respected the values and families and vice versa. This relied upon:

- ➤ An ethos and culture of mutual respect in schools
- ➤ Staff knowledge of and interest in Gypsy and Traveller culture
- ➤ Embracing all cultures and not singling out students as different

Safety & Trust

Safety and trust were high priorities for Gypsy and Traveller parents. Facilitating these for both pupils and their parents included:

- ➤ Key personnel in school that pupils and parents could relate to and easily contact
- ➤ General and dedicated pastoral care in schools; i.e. peer support programmes, anti-bullying policies

Partnerships

- ➤ Encouraging inter-agency involvement and partnerships between pupils and other agencies i.e. links with Universities
- ➤ Working in partnership with parents and the whole community
- ➤ Good information sharing between TES workers and school staff
- ➤ Collaborative working with TES i.e. in access and induction of pupils
- ➤ The embedding of specialist knowledge and practice of the TES.

High Expectations

- ➤ Tracking and monitoring the progress of Gypsy and Traveller pupils

Conclusion

2.45. The data indicates that despite an increase in the number of Gypsy and Traveller children registered in schools across Wales, the attainment and attendance of these pupils is still too low. Research has shown that throughout their education, Gypsy and Traveller pupils face a unique set of barriers towards engagement. The most important factor relates to perceptions of school, which are connected to anxiety and distinct cultural values. Best practice has predominantly described the importance of access, inclusion, safety and trust, partnerships and expectations within the context of the role of schools. Research on the role of the TES in engaging families has been limited. The research that does exist alludes to the TES playing an important, supportive and 'brokering' role between families and schools. However, little is known about the ways in which such practice has been successful, as few

studies document any outcomes. In particular, there is a need for further in-depth and evidence based research to capture what works in engaging families at successive stages in education, with a particular focus on the issues of attainment, attendance, transition and retention.

3. Local Authority Provision

Introduction

3.1 This chapter presents the findings from a survey of Local Authorities (LAs) who currently receive the annual Gypsy and Traveller Education Grant. Sixteen out of the 19 LAs provided a response. The data in this section is based on self-reported data and some aspects were incomplete. Therefore, care should be taking when interpreting this data and the findings should be treated as indicative.

3.2 This chapter presents evidence of multi-agency working and introduces examples of provision and factors cited as important for engagement. The chapter provides a broader context for the in-depth qualitative findings presented in the next chapter.

The Gypsy and Traveller population: group characteristics

3.3 The number of different Gypsy and Traveller groups known to reside in LAs ranged from one to five. The most represented were Traveller of Irish Heritage and British Gypsy/Gypsy Roma. Only five LAs reported that Gypsy/Gypsy Roma from other countries were residing in their LA.

Mobility

3.4 Overall, nine LAs described the majority of Gypsy and Traveller families as 'mostly settled' (i.e. residing in bricks and mortar accommodation and/or who rarely/never travel). Two LAs described the mobility of families as 'partially settled/partially nomadic' (families who settle for several months but tend to follow traveling patterns during the summer). Only one LA described the majority of families as 'fully nomadic' (those who are highly mobile, often moving to the next destination within weeks/days). A quarter of the sample described the mobility of families as 'other' which included a combination of these groups.

Figure 4: The mobility of the Gypsy and Travellers across Wales

Pie chart segments labelled: 9, 4, 2, 1

Legend:
- Mostly settled
- Other
- Partially settled/partially nomadic
- Fully nomadic
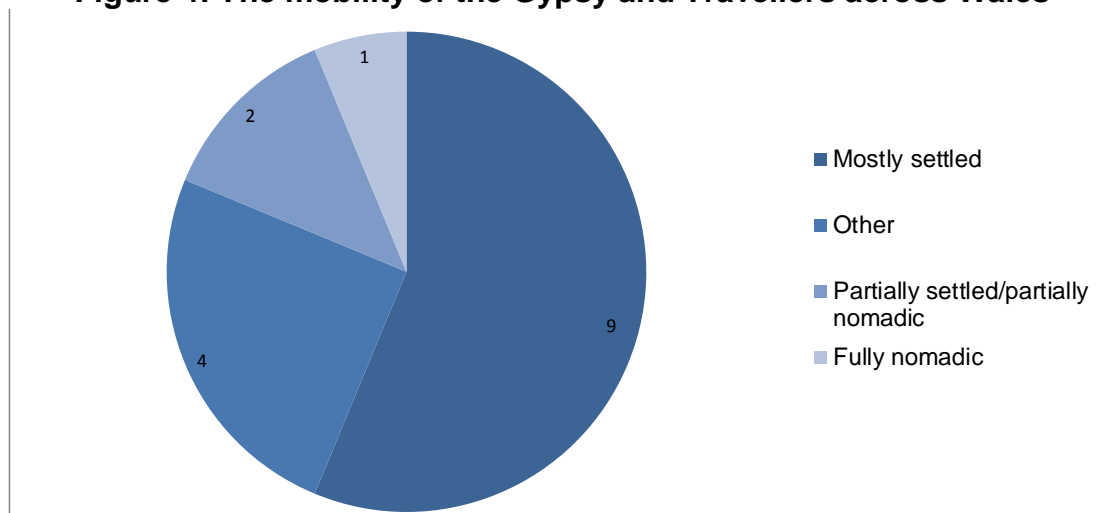
Source: Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families, *A survey of LA provision* (2014)

Service Provision

Number of Gypsy and Travellers supported

3.5 Survey respondents were asked to provide details on the number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils they supported directly in their LA. Fifteen LAs responded to this question and the breakdown is shown in the table below. These figures should be treated with caution as they were collected in a different way to the PLASC figures and the data returned for the Gypsy and Traveller education grant (see paragraph 2.7). However, they do reflect a broader geographical pattern than is reflected elsewhere. The LAs supporting the greatest number of registered Gypsy and Traveller pupils included: Cardiff (364), Newport (349), and Pembrokeshire (247). The LAs supporting the smallest number of registered pupils included: Monmouthshire (4), Conwy (7) and Neath Port Talbot (17).

Table 2: The number of registered Gypsy and Traveller pupils who receive support, shown by school type by education level

Local Authority	Nursery/ Pre-school	Primary	Secondary	Post compulsory	Total
Bridgend	5	52	3	**	60*
Cardiff	32	173	155	4	364
Carmarthenshire	0	110	48	7	165
Conwy	**	6	1	**	7*
Flintshire	8	111	34	3	156
Merthyr Tydfil	1	37	13	4	55
Gwynedd	1	10	9	3	23
Monmouthshire	0	3	1	0	4
Neath Port Talbot	*1**	37	13	4	55*
Newport	0	211	110	28	349
Pembrokeshire	23	131	83	10	247
Powys	0	21	28	**	49
Rhondda Cynon Taff	2	17	5	**	24*
Swansea	18	26	28	9	81
Torfaen	8	36	39	4	87
Total	**82**	**944**	**567**	**76**	**1,726***

Source: Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families, *A survey of LA provision* (2014)
**= Unknown
*= Estimated total

3.6   In addition to this, 13 LAs supported children who were either receiving alternative provision, were temporarily de-registered and/or currently receiving EHE. Swansea and Pembrokeshire supported the greatest number of non-registered Gypsy and Traveller children (20+), while Powys supported the fewest (1).

3.7   It was not possible to ascertain the nature of the support (i.e. academic, pastoral) provided to Gypsy and Traveller children in these circumstances and therefore this data should be treated as indicative.

Table 3: **The number of the Gypsy and Traveller children who currently receive alternative provision, and/or EHE**

Local Authority	Number of Gypsy and Traveller children
Bridgend	0
Cardiff	10
Carmarthenshire	3
Conwy	3
Flintshire	4
Merthyr Tydfil	4
Gwynedd	2
Monmouthshire	0
Neath Port Talbot	3
Newport	5
Pembrokeshire	20+
Powys	1
Rhondda Cynon Taff	2
Swansea	20+
Torfaen	0
Total	**77**

Source: Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families, *A survey of LA provision* (2014)
**= Unknown
*= Estimated total

3.8   Most LAs (11) delivered the majority of support on school premises in classrooms/meeting rooms. Two LAs delivered the majority of support via a discrete unit or centre. One LA used a discrete unit within the grounds of a comprehensive school. One LA delivered the majority of support on Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Figure 5: The proportion of responses by delivery of support

- In school classrooms/meeting rooms
- Discrete unit or centre
- Other
- On Gypsy Traveller sites
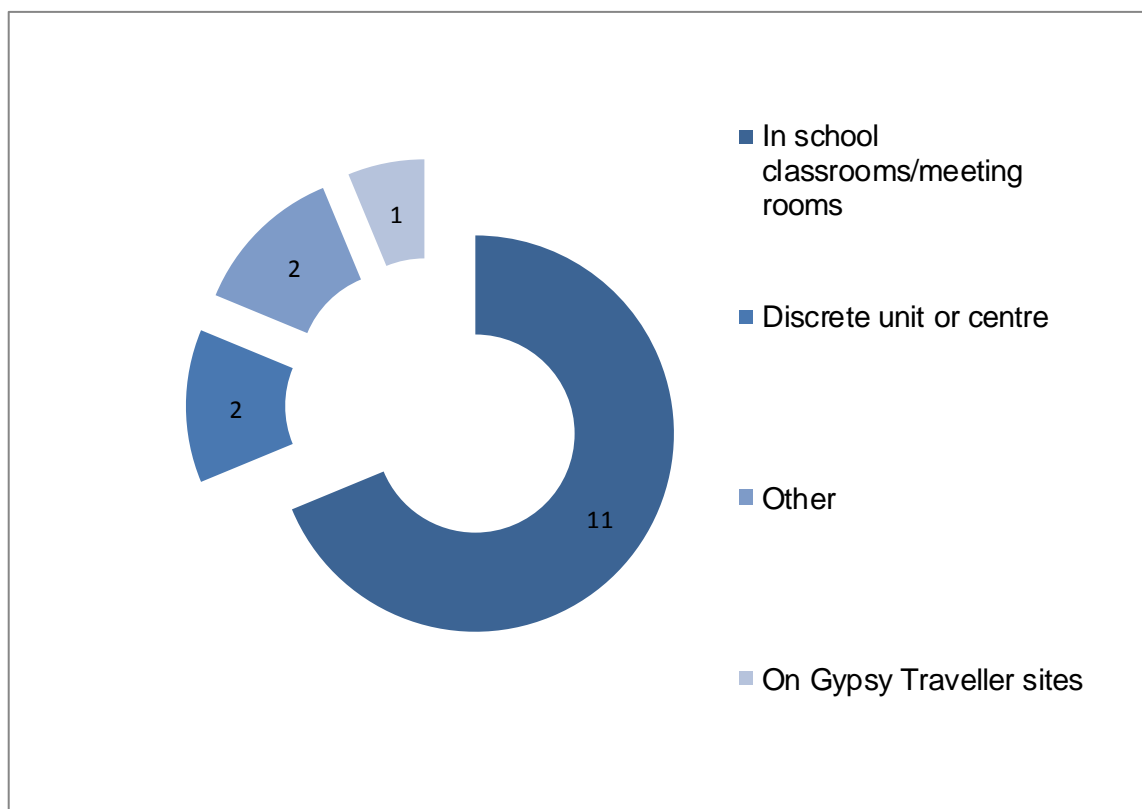
Source: Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families, *A survey of LA provision* (2014)

Monitoring Attendance and Attainment

3.9   All the LAs monitored the attendance and attainment of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. However, the personnel responsible for collecting this data and how and when it was sourced varied significantly. In some cases, designated staff were responsible for collecting and reporting data to the TES, while in other cases, service providers and schools were responsible for this. This data was also collected at different points during the school year on both an individual and/or a cohort basis. How this data was recorded and stored also varied, with some LAs accessing data via paper based reports and others through an online centralised database. To add to this complexity, some LAs utilised a combination of sources and methods to obtain their data. Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the range of sources, methods and outputs provided by LAs in response to the question of how they collected data.

Table 4: LA Methods of Data Collection

	Attendance	Attainment
Source	• School improvement e-learning team • Schools: Schools Inclusion Officer or Attendance Officer • Alternative providers • TES staff • Education Welfare Officer	
Frequency	• Lesson by lesson basis • Daily • Weekly • Fort-nightly • Termly	• Half termly • Termly • Bi-annually • Annually
Method	• School registration system e.g. paper based and/or SIMS online • Tracking via LA centralised registration system • Separate attendance monitoring system co-ordinated by the TES	• Established on a 'work done' basis • Termly assessments • National assessments • Tracking attainment alongside interventions received • Attainment linked to PLASC
Output	• Online database • Paper-based reports • Electronic reports	Online systems & paper-based reports Termly progress reports • Bi-annual progress reports • National Test scores • Tracking of CSI • Data uploaded to a separate database or one centralised database
Retrieval	• Accessing a separate database held by the TES • TES accessing the centralised database managed by the LA • Schools submitting their data to the TES	

Source: Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families, *A survey of LA provision* (2014)

3.10 The highly individualised means by which LAs obtained and monitored the attainment and attendance indicates a risk of inconsistency in how progress is tracked, which makes the assessment of support provided very difficult.

Links with other Service Providers

3.11 As part of their provision for Gypsy and Travellers, TES Leads regularly worked with a range of other service providers (including the statutory and voluntary sectors). These assisted with the delivery of:

- Academic provision i.e. courses, placements, interventions
- Targeted initiatives
- Supporting pupils and families with additional needs (via referrals) e.g. mental health, housing
- Project work with Gypsy and Traveller pupils
- Direct outreach work with families
- Engaging the wider Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Campaigning.

3.12 LAs shared links with a wide range of different providers - see the table below. However, the co-ordination, role delegation and the delivery of provision amongst these services differed across Wales. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain the quality and effectiveness of these links based on the data obtained. However, the evidence demonstrates that multi-agency working is taking place across the majority of LAs in some capacity.

Table 5: Examples of LA Links with other organisations

Services/Agencies/Staff
• Youth Service • Social Services • Education Welfare Service • Health Services and Health Visitors • Children and Young People Mental Health Services • Basic Skills Team • Team around the Family • Behaviour Support Team • Pupil Referral Unit • Speech and Language Support Team • Equality and Human Rights Commission • Mentoring schemes and play services • Careers Wales • Citizens Advice • Family Liaison Officers • Housing Officers • Community Cohesion Officers • Families First and Flying Start
Voluntary
• Show Racism the Red Card • YMCA • Barnardo's Cymru • Romani Arts Company • Save the Children

Examples of provision

3.13 TES leads listed a wide range of support and activities that they were involved in delivering to the community. Some examples of this are provided below - however, these only give a partial insight into the multi-

dimensional support provided to Gypsy and Travellers.

3.14 Work with families

- Regular home visits
- Providing literacy and numeracy classes for parents
- Meetings with parents in the community e.g. coffee mornings
- Referrals to other services and agencies.

3.15 Work with schools

- Negotiating school places
- Securing transport for pupils
- Helping to develop the curriculum e.g. a bespoke curriculum for KS4 Roma pupils
- Facilitating phased returns to school.

3.16 Work with Gypsy and Traveller pupils

- Providing tailored academic support
- Transition work e.g. delivering transition projects
- Supporting integration.

Key factors

3.17 TES leads identified the factors that are integral to successful engagement. These are below and introduce the themes for the findings of this research.

3.18 Traveller Education Service provision

- Appropriate staffing levels and working strategically
- An easily accessible service to the Gypsy and Traveller community
- Continuity of staffing – i.e. the same individuals visiting families over time
- An understanding of the Gypsy and Traveller community
- Established links with Education Welfare Service staff in schools.

3.19 Working with Gypsy and Traveller families

- Building genuine and positive relationships
- Regular contact and good verbal communication
- Active listening to the worries and concerns of parents
- Working with the whole family
- Promoting school as positive 'priority'
- Supporting families when issues arise in school.

3.20 Working with the whole community

- Gaining the trust of the whole community
- Raising aspirations and celebrating success within the Gypsy and Traveller community.

3.21 Schools

- An understanding and knowledge of the Gypsy and Traveller culture
- A flexible 'whole school' approach to supporting Gypsy and Travellers
- High expectations of Gypsy and Traveller pupils
- Appropriate resources
- The provision of tailored academic support
- Promoting regular attendance
- Engaging and interesting lessons
- The availability of vocational courses.

4   Key findings: Engaging Families in Primary School

Introduction

4.1 Establishing relationships with Gypsy and Traveller families and the wider community at an early stage was of vital importance to the success of engagement at later stages of education.

Barriers

4.2 Overall, interviewees cited the barriers towards engagement at Primary school in less depth than at Secondary. The most prominent barriers to attendance and subsequent attainment included:

- Non-disclosure of ethnic background
- Transport issues and gaining access to school sites
- Mobility linked to travelling patterns
- Behavioural issues

Successful practice

4.3 The rest of this chapter focusses on the following features of what works in engaging families at Primary school:

Outreach work with families:

- Initiating and establishing genuine relationships with families and the community at an early stage.

Support for Gypsy and Traveller pupils:

- The provision of additional tailored academic support where needed.

Outreach work: building relationships

4.4 The most important practice for facilitating engagement at Primary school and beyond was i) gaining the trust of the Gypsy and Traveller community at an early stage and ii) building genuine relationships with families based on mutual respect. Building long term and meaningful relationships with families early in a child's educational journey

underpinned the effectiveness and success of engagement during the later stages of transition, retention and re-engagement.

Gaining trust

4.5 For staff working directly with the children, gaining the trust of the Gypsy and Traveller community was described as a difficult and slow process, which took time to develop. It necessitated mutual respect, sensitivity and understanding. Once trust was gained, it needed to be strengthened and maintained across time. This required an element of 'proving yourself' to earn the respect of the community. This involved 'going the extra mile', making intentions explicit and 'delivering on your word'. Crucially, this enabled families and the community to perceive the intentions of TES workers as genuine. As a TES worker explained:

[While] it has involved a lot of hard work, it has not been easy… once I have 'got in' with the families, I think there is an element of having to prove yourself to them, because sometimes when you say you are going to do something you really do have to do it… the parents have to see the support and it has to be a genuine relationship on both parts…
- Flintshire, TES

4.6 Furthermore, it was important that TES workers gained the trust and acceptance of the whole community as opposed to just a few families. Managing trust was likened to 'walking a tight rope' whereby one had to exercise a great deal of caution in trying 'not to put a foot wrong'. This was challenging, because as a TES worker in Wrexham remarked, "often you have to introduce things that initially children and families do not want".

4.7 At the same time, the effort of gaining trust was sometimes undermined by the tendency of other agencies not to deliver on 'promises' to the Gypsy and Traveller community. As one member of staff explained:

Generally speaking, in some ways the Gypsy and Traveller community lack confidence and you can't let them down in any way... you can't put them in a situation where others will let them down....lots of people in the past like councillors and other agencies have gone on site and told families they can do this and they can do that ...and then none of [it] happens and the community just starts to lose faith…

-Pembrokeshire, TES

4.8 Despite on site contact with the whole Gypsy and Traveller community, some staff held stronger and more influential relationships with the community than others. The TES workers with these relationships were those who delivered the majority of direct outreach work in schools and on site. Therefore, some TES workers had been more successful in engaging families than others.

Initiating dialogue

4.9 Initiating dialogue with families who had no previous history of school attendance or explicit knowledge of the TES was challenging. This was particularly evident when the TES was described as 'less established'.

Successful Practice
'Initiating dialogue with Gypsy and Traveller Community'
Pembrokeshire, TES
Context
When the TES in Pembroke was first established, there was a lack of communication between the TES and the Gypsy and Traveller community.
Actions
The TES initiated dialogue with the community by informally visiting all families on site. During these visits, the TES worker asked families who had children of school age what areas of education or topics they wanted their children to learn in school.
Outcomes
Several families who were previously unknown engaged with the TES. This also helped the TES identify the needs of the community. It emerged that parents whose children were disengaged with school predominantly wanted their children to focus on English, Maths and ICT.

4.10 Once dialogue with the Gypsy and Traveller community was instigated, regular on site visits were an important part of building relationships with families. As two TES workers illustrated:

> *I go down the site and I work at least once a week, if not two or three times a week...if I see a child, I say hello and I'll ask them how long they're staying and, if the child [is of] school age, if they want to go to school...*
>
> *-Flintshire, TES*

4.11 Within the context of a close knit community, 'getting in' with some key families early on was effective for establishing trust with other families in the community. Openness and transparency was an important element of this. A TES worker explained:

So this is my ninth year, I think if you can get in with some 'key families' early on that is really important...I made the links with the young people and families whose children I supported...they could see the rapport that I had with their children and they kind of took that on board as well...The main part of this is about being quite open, ensuring that I am sharing all of the information that I know is out there…

- Wrexham, TES

Support for Gypsy and Traveller pupils

4.12 Primary school attendance was poor for some Gypsy and Traveller children. Although the majority of families were settled, a few maintained regular travelling patterns. In addition to travelling, behavioural, social and academic issues within school were a contributing factor towards decreased attendance for some Gypsy and Traveller pupils[3].

4.13 The impact of poor attendance on achievement at Primary school, particularly for literacy and numeracy, was 'significant' in certain cases. For children who experienced interrupted learning, the provision of 'learning packs' had limited success in facilitating continuity of learning. This was due to poor literacy among some Gypsy and Traveller parents.

Tailored academic support

4.14 For the families with regular travelling patterns, providing tailored academic support to help those who returned to school after a period of interrupted leaning was important. The provision of additional academic support was also important for pupils whose achievement was below average.

4.15 Within current resource constraints, TES workers in Cardiff highlighted the importance of targeting academic support to Gypsy and Travellers who were achieving 'below their chronological age' rather than because of their ethnic status alone. Support provided by the TES included one-to-one and/or group work within and/or outside of lessons. For example,

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[3] Barriers relating to social, academic and behaviour issues in school are discussed further in sections 2 and 3.

the TES in Cardiff secured places and assisted with the delivery of literacy and numeracy-based interventions.

Successful Practice
'Academic support, monitoring and 'boost' work'
Wrexham, TES

Context

The TES provided academic support to Gypsy and Traveller children whose achievement was below average. This involved two hours a week of extra support on either a one-to-one or small group basis. Sometimes children were taken out of class to receive this support.

Actions

Staff held personal profiles of each child. Each pupil was given 'catch-up' work to cover the lesson missed. This was supplemented with support during lessons and reinforced the material covered during lessons. Two TES learning support teachers assisted in delivery and attainment was monitored carefully.

The TES set up a 'pooling system', whereby each staff member was responsible for supporting certain children. The children with poor attendance were prioritised and given 'boost work' through additional numeracy and literacy support. The careful tracking of attendance and attainment meant when children had been off school for a period of time, their needs could be prioritised.

Outcomes

Knowing where a child 'left off' and exactly how long they had been away allowed staff to target their support more accurately and effectively. Tailoring support in this way helped to raise pupils' levels of achievement quickly and efficiently.

4.16 The effectiveness of the support outlined in this chapter required staff to revise, modify and amend provision continually as each child progressed. The capability of the TES to provide individually tailored academic support relied upon:

- The ongoing monitoring of attainment and attendance
- Effective allocation of staff to assist pupils
- The availability of classrooms in school for 'out of class' one-to-one and small group provision.

5. Key Findings: Transition

Introduction

5.1   For most Gypsy and Traveller pupils and their families the transition from Primary to Secondary school is characterised by uncertainty. This section considers the barriers to transfer and means of mitigating them.

Barriers

5.2   The research identified a number of barriers to transition. Understanding these barriers is important for understanding how TES workers can work with families and the challenges facing them. This section looks in detail at the most prominent barriers experienced around transition to Secondary school.

Cultural values

5.3   It was the collective experience of TES workers that most Gypsy and Traveller parents express an initial reluctance towards their child's transfer to Secondary school. The reasons centred on cultural values, which included, coming of age, gender roles, and expectations around work, courtship and marriage. Moreover, some families interpreted a 'sufficient level' of education to mean being able to read and write. Therefore, some did not feel that Secondary education held any relevance to their 'way of life'.

Perceptions of Secondary School

5.4   The initial reasons given to TES staff by parents in most cases did not explain the deeper rationales for reluctance towards transfer. These reasons were often about deeper issues of fear exacerbated by parental views about Secondary school.

Fears linked to integration and school as a 'risky' place

5.5   The Gypsy and Traveller parents' fears centred on issues related to social contact with the settled community. Parents feared that their

child's social contact with the settled community would weaken their cultural identity and that 'mixing' in school would signal the loss of the cultural values and moral compass which parents had worked hard to instil in their children. Parents feared that such 'dilution' would result in their child engaging in pre-marital sex and substance abuse. Parents also feared their child would be 'culturally isolated' and would be subject to bullying and racism.

5.6   One TES worker noted that, in her experience, some parents did not know what a classroom or a school looked like. This unfamiliarity promoted views that school was a 'risky' and unsafe place, where their child could be exposed to a variety of general, physical and/or emotional harms.

Changing attitudes towards Secondary education

5.7   Despite the tendency for most families to express reluctance towards their child's transfer to Secondary school, the research found that some attitudes towards education beyond Primary school were changing. These attitudes were connected to the decline in traditional sources of employment and increasing demand for documentation and qualifications.

5.8   TES workers have found that some parents want their child to receive education, but it is Secondary *school* rather than Secondary education towards which they express reluctance.

5.9   In Wrexham, a TES worker described the families who value education as 'the newer generation' of Gypsy and Travellers, who have had greater access to opportunities and were willing to grant greater agency to their children. For children within these families, gaining qualifications was now 'part of their culture'. Children expressed a desire to train to access their chosen trade/profession. However, many of the TES workers elsewhere described these families as 'few and far between' and

described changing attitudes towards education as a slow process.

Attitudes towards post 16 education

5.10 The research found that whereas some parents were firmly 'against' sending their child to Secondary school, attitudes towards Post 16 education and training were positive. For example, during an informal conversation with two Gypsy and Traveller mothers, one remarked:

> *"I would one million percent never send my daughter to the Comprehensive...she can go to college though"*

When asked why, she explained:

> *"Well when you get to college it is less about boys…it is more career focused"*

> *- A Gypsy and Traveller parent, Pembroke*

5.11 Both mothers had limited experience of Secondary school, but attended college and were studying part-time for degrees. A TES worker in Flintshire explained that a parent might be more inclined to 'allow' their child to attend college because of the belief that children were 'less at risk' at the ages of 16 and onwards.

Successful Practice

5.12 The following sub-sections draw upon elements of practice which, when used collectively, are successful in facilitating the transfer of Secondary school and these are summarised in the table below. They include working directly with both parents and children in schools and via home liaison/family outreach work. Together, these practices help alleviate fears and misconceptions connected to Secondary school.

Table 6: A summary of what works at transition

What works?	How does it work?
Work in Primary schools • Transition projects • Working directly with the child • Visits to Secondary schools	• Challenges misconceptions of school, provides reassurance and support to pupils
Home liaison- outreach work • Providing support and reassurance to parents • Parental visits to Secondary schools	• Uncovering the 'deeper' reasons for not wanting transfer • Alleviates concerns and fears • Challenges perceptions of school • Frames school as a positive and 'realistic' choice
Work with Secondary schools • Secure links with feeder schools • Staff visits to sites	• Bridges the gap between Primary and Secondary • Helps parents to feel valued

Transition work

5.13 All of the TES staff interviewed undertook 'transition work' with Gypsy and Traveller children towards the end of Year 6. However, by whom, and how this work was done varied. Some TES workers offered a structured programme of support whereby pupils attended separate weekly sessions during school hours for a fixed period. This was offered in addition to informal pastoral support from TES staff in Primary schools. Alternatively, transition work was embedded across existing structures. This support was tailored to the specific needs of each cohort. Transition work also incorporated informal conversations with pupils, both in school and outside school. Transition programmes were described as an opportunity for Gypsy and Travellers to:

• engage in practical project work, arts and crafts, role playing and so on

• voice any worries or concerns about going to Secondary school

• visit Secondary schools.

5.14 During sessions, TES staff offered practical advice as well as general reassurance and guidance to Gypsy and Traveller pupils. Transition work was crucial for challenging pupils' perceptions of Secondary school and for alleviating fears, worries and concerns regarding transfer.

Successful practice
'***A transition programme'- challenging perceptions and supporting children'***
Wrexham, TES

Context

A transition programme was run in a Primary school and was delivered by a worker who works closely with families in schools and on site. Towards the end of the summer term, pupils attended one session a week for up to 10 weeks. The programme was not exclusively for Gypsy and Traveller children. Other 'vulnerable' pupils were encouraged to attend. In addition to being inclusive, this meant that often Gypsies and Travellers attended the programme with a friend who went to the same school. This was important in ensuring the programme was well attended and was a 'big help' in encouraging Gypsy and Traveller children themselves to transfer. As the TES worker involved illustrated:

> *I tend to ask the feeder schools if they have got anyone else who would like to attend the programme, preferably a friend of a Gypsy and Traveller who is also going to that school, because that is a big help for them wanting to go to high school because their friend is wanting to go…*

The sessions were designed to be fun and engaging for pupils.

Key features of the programme

1. Practical advice

Sessions were organised around the feedback from previous children and focused on a 'top ten list of worries'. These included: *"What should I do if I have forgotten my homework?" or "What happens if I get lost?"* These concerns are important for pupils as some lacked confidence in articulating

the issues themselves. This provided preparation for dealing with situations and how to approach a teacher if a problem arose.

2. *Role-playing and scenario work*

As part of tackling the initial worries about going to school, a drama student facilitated role-playing and scenario work. The pupils acted out scenarios that could occur in Secondary school. For example, one scene depicted a pupil who was lost in school. Activities also included singing and performing dance routines.

3. *Identity work and 'making friends'*

In response to the tendency for Gypsy and Traveller children to be reluctant to disclose their identity, an activity called '*Me, Myself and I*' was developed. This centred on positively affirming identity and making friends. This was a creative activity and required pupils to ask each other questions including '*where are you from*'? The TES worker found that Gypsy and Traveller pupils were proud of their cultural heritage and were open about disclosing it to others.

4. *School visits*

This was an important part of being able to 'see what school was really like'. Pupils were able to visit the school canteen and speak to current Gypsy and Traveller pupils. This gave pupils a positive and tangible experience upon which to base their perceptions.

Outcomes

The TES worker indicated that pupils who had been on the transition programme had 'loved' it and had looked forward to many of activities planned. It also provided an interesting and fun 'break' for children. This played an important part in facilitating the transition of 100% of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils supported that year.

Successful practice
'***Transition work'- further activity examples***
Flintshire, TES

Context

The TES identified the need to tackle perceptions that Gypsy and Traveller children held of Secondary school ("an awful place") and the limited interaction with the settled community.

Activity examples

Gypsy and Traveller pupils drew pictures of a Traveller boy and a Traveller girl on one side, and a picture of a non-Gypsy or Traveller, on the other side of the sheet. After discussing these drawings as a group, staff felt some views were ingrained in the community and actions needed to be taken to ensure effective transfer. Therefore, staff invited Gypsy and Traveller pupils who attended Secondary school to speak to Primary pupils about their experiences of Secondary school.

Outcomes

The above was important in directly challenging pupils' perceptions and for helping to 'feed through' to a gradual shift in wider community perceptions.

Working with the child

5.15 All the TES workers stated that working directly with the child was crucial for effective transition. This was particularly important in cases where parents were very reluctant to allow their child to go to Secondary school. TES workers found in some cases, if the child wanted to attend Secondary school, this would take precedence in family decision-making and therefore transition was much more likely to happen. However, the converse decision not to transfer would also be taken if a child did not want to go to Secondary school.

5.16 However, working with the child in this way was something that needed to be carefully balanced alongside one-to-one work with parents as part of a 'whole family'[4] approach. For example:

We have had families that have often said "no way, no way they are not going to high school" and we've managed to get them to transfer, but that is because those children want to go…We had worked on the whole family; the kids, friends were going and then they want to go as well…

- TES worker, Flintshire

5.17 As part of increasing the desire to transfer, TES staff 'promoted' Secondary school in conversation with children by:
- Identifying aspirations and educational interests and matching those with the educational opportunities that Secondary school offers
- Identifying and organising a friend (usually another Gypsy Traveller) for a pupil to transfer with.

5.18 The effectiveness of promoting transfer as something exciting and positive for Gypsy and Traveller children relied very heavily upon the trusting and supportive relationships that TES workers had built with children in their earlier Primary school years.

Home liaison: outreach work with parents

5.19 Outreach work with families and parents was crucial for facilitating transfer. The possibility of transfer needed to be effectively articulated to parents, negotiated and managed before, during and after the period of transition. The ways in which TES staff presented Secondary school as a viable choice relied on challenging Gypsy and Traveller perceptions of school and supporting families by providing ongoing guidance, reassurance and advice. Encouraging parents to get involved in school visits was an important part of challenging preconceptions.

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[4] See section: 'Home liaison: outreach work with families' for further explanation on a 'whole family approach'

5.20 The effectiveness of the process was heavily dependent upon the relationships established with families in Primary school years. In some cases, parental agreement to transfer hinged entirely upon their trust and respect for TES workers. The following sub-sections present forms of outreach work. When these are used in combination with other practices, they contribute to successful transition.

Identifying 'deeper' rationales

5.21 Some parents did not always articulate the full reason they did not want their child to transfer with the complete rationale only emerging after several conversations. Early and regular outreach work was important in identifying these deeper rationales.

5.22 For example, towards the end of Year 6, TES staff in Cardiff telephone each Gypsy and Traveller parent to discuss the possibility of their child's transfer. This is followed up with a visit on site for further discussion. The topic of transition was framed positively within the context of discussing their child's progress and educational needs:

> *Parents will immediately say "no" and we will ask: "well do you really think that is the right thing to do?" Then we will go and visit them onsite…and then we will talk to them about their child…and say "your child is bright, they are doing really well they need to go on" and then you will get the answer: "oh no, well they can't because they need to learn the culture, we don't want them mixing …and that in secondary schools there is drugs, sex…"Oh high schools are the worst place for Gypsy Travellers"…*
>
> *-Cardiff, TES*

5.23 This visit and subsequent follow-up visits provided parents with an opportunity to discuss their child's progress as well as identifying deeper rationales behind the reluctance to transfer. In addition, it was possible for staff to determine which family members were more reluctant than

others were. This allowed staff to tailor their support to suit individual families and use their time effectively.

Presenting school as a 'positive choice'

5.24 School attendance was presented to parents as both a positive and realistic option for their child. This included the following:

- Being honest, open and transparent with parents
- Giving parents as much information as possible
- Illustrating their child's potential within the context of 'high aspirations'
- Helping parents to reflect on their own beliefs and reasons for not wanting transfer.

5.25 These issues were approached very carefully with parents as it was important they did not feel the matter was being 'forced on them' but that it was their decision. TES workers had to guide each family member to the logical conclusion of transfer, rather than 'pushing' them into it. Being honest and providing as much information as possible was important because it gave them a degree of self-determination within the discussions.

5.26 As part of presenting education as a 'positive choice', some TES workers were able to identify places at preferred schools. This increased the likelihood of transfer, particularly when some parents expressed a strong objection to certain Secondary schools. Sometimes, this was difficult, as some schools were reluctant to accept Gypsy and Traveller pupils because of the potential implications for their attendance figures.

Working with the 'whole family'

5.27 TES staff highlighted the importance of working with 'the whole family' over a period of time as vital for facilitating effective transfer. TES staff noted that mothers took on the responsibility of parenting in the majority of families and that discussions about education usually took place with the mother. In some families, both parents and children had some

influence in persuading one another about transfer. Therefore, working with each family member 'to make sure they were all on board' throughout was important. However, the importance of meaningful relationships based on trust and mutual respect between TES workers and families was vital to the effectiveness of this way of working. For example, a TES worker in Pembrokeshire highlighted that speaking to fathers in the school car park was useful in discussing their child's plans. Equally, with more formal meetings, staff were flexible and accommodating about preferences as to when and where to meet.

5.28 A vital part of working with Gypsy and Traveller parents was giving families 'breathing space'. For example:

We work very hard with the parents... I mean, if the parent is particularly determined and says 'no', then we will leave it a little while before discussing it with them again….

- Cardiff, TES

5.29 TES staff indicated that if they continually 'bombarded' parents and did not allow them enough time to consider their decision, fathers in particular, would sometimes 'put their foot down'. In these situations, the dialogue between TES workers and families could be 'cut off' and workers would be 'shut out' from broaching the topic again. This was why it was important to consider carefully when to visit and when to discuss certain things. This required a high level of skill and sensitivity in working with each family to present transfer as a positive choice.

Alleviating fear and challenging perceptions
5.30 One of the most important ways of alleviating parental concerns was by providing reassurance. A significant element of this was to appreciate, understand and sympathise with parents' concerns. For example, TES workers often drew upon their own experiences as parents in empathising with the concerns of parents.

5.31 A crucial aspect of alleviating concerns was to remind parents that a TES worker would continue to provide support and would be available should any issues arise. This was dependant on the continuity of staffing, but gave parents an additional sense of security. This was particularly effective when TES staff worked with families at Primary school and were able to continue working with them during, before and after their transition to Secondary school.

5.32 The TES staff interviewed found that some parents had never been inside a school classroom or a large Secondary school. As part of their work with parents, TES staff showed parents around schools. These visits gave parents a tangible insight in which to situate their perceptions of school. This was particularly important for challenging preconceived ideas about the environment of Secondary school. Further, knowing where their child would be during school hours and where they could go if they experienced any issues was important for providing reassurance that their child would be safe in school. This is illustrated by a TES worker:

We have previously taken parents up to the school to show them around and point out "this is where your child can go if they are upset. When some Gypsy and Traveller parents actually see that the school is a quiet place during lesson times….. it gives parents an insight and we have had quite a lot of success in the past 10 years…

- Cardiff, TES

5.33 However, staff in Flintshire found that convincing parents to visit a school can be difficult. They often said to parents 'just go and have a look, so you know what it is that you don't want'. Sometimes this worked in getting parents to set foot in a school.

Successful Practice
'A Day in the Life of: DVD'
Wrexham, TES

Context

A DVD, which was filmed, voiced and edited by Gypsy and Traveller Secondary school pupils, was produced. This was driven by a TES worker who thought that parents would engage in something that was produced by children in their community. As the TES worker illustrated:

> *"If we got the children on board then we could get the parents on board...it got me thinking"*

Actions

The DVD depicted a 'typical' day in school for Gypsy and Traveller pupils. It addressed some key worries that parents held about Secondary school and featured staff talking about the support they would provide. The DVD was shown to parents in their homes as part of outreach work. However, a special screening event for a larger gathering group of parents is planned.

Outcomes:

TES worker found that after watching the DVD, parents felt:

- Comforted that their child would be supported in school
- Reassured that their child would be 'taken care of' at school and out of harm's way
- Relieved that their child was unlikely to be bullied.

The TES workers said that it was vital for parents to see the structures, support and ethos that had been established in schools. Further, the children involved in producing the film were reported to have felt 'totally empowered' by the process of making the DVD.

5.34 The effective support outlined in this chapter, requires staff to work continually with families to ensure that the transition to Secondary school takes place. The essential factors for success identified include:

- Established relationships with Gypsy and Traveller families based on trust and mutual respect (built early on)

- Working directly with families home liaison/family outreach work
- Established links with Secondary schools
- High academic expectations of pupils, and
- Good levels of communication between Primary feeder schools and Secondary schools.

6. Key Findings: Retention at Secondary School

Introduction

6.1 Keeping Gypsy and Traveller pupils in Secondary school is a significant challenge, evidenced by levels of non-attendance, school exclusions and withdrawals from school. This chapter identifies the barriers towards retention in terms of: i) experience ii) impact and iii) consequence. Practices that promote retention and re-engagement are identified.

Barriers

6.2 The barriers towards retention centred on the impact and corresponding consequences of experiences encountered in Secondary school:

Table 7: Summary of the barriers towards retention

Experience	Impact
- Travelling/mobility - Behavioural issues - The school social environment: - Friendships - Social integration[5] - Relationships - A lack of flexibility - Low cultural understanding	*Impact on the child:* - Interrupted learning - Underachievement - Social and/or cultural 'isolation' *= Negative association with school attendance*
	Impact on parent/s: - Validation of perceptions of school - Increased fear for their child's emotional, physical and/or general wellbeing *= A loss of trust in the 'school' system & doubts about the intentions and values of staff*

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[5] Although bullying was identified as an issue in some cases, it was not cited as a prevalent across the schools TES staff supported.

Further Consequences
• Further non attendance
• School exclusions
• Elective Home Education (withdrawal from school)

6.3 Disengagement was directly connected to the impact of experiences in school. Hence, the barriers towards retention were interconnected and often resulted in further disengagement. This can be illustrated as follows:

Figure 6: Key barriers towards retention
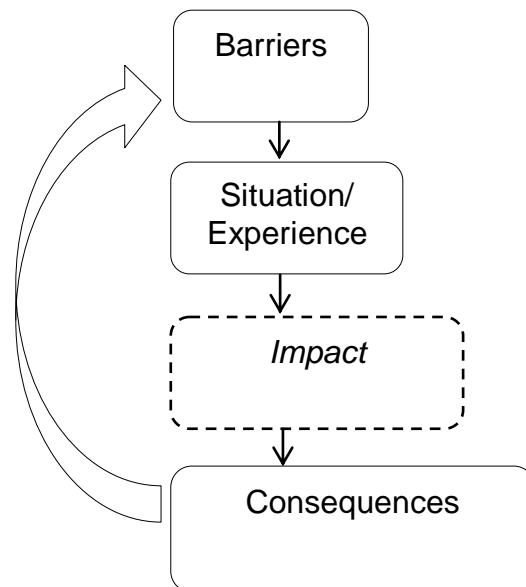
6.4 The research found that Gypsy and Traveller pupils often faced a number of challenging experiences (often at the same time) at different points while at Secondary school. Experiences affected some pupils and their families in different ways.

6.5 For example, certain experiences such as 'falling out' with friends, and travelling, were often unavoidable. However, TES staff were able to mediate and diffuse the impact of these experiences. This decreased the likelihood of further non-attendance and school exclusions.

6.6 The following sections explain the barriers and the processes identified in figure 7 in greater depth. It also highlights how practices were shown to reduce the consequences of challenging experiences. However, the effectiveness of these are dependent upon established relationships between TES workers and families based on trust.

School context

6.7 Overall, the majority of Secondary schools that TES staff worked with were described as having an inclusive ethos, a good knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller culture and a strong understanding of the individual needs of Gypsy and Traveller pupils. Overall, the schools who catered for other vulnerable learners and who had a positive and inclusive ethos were the ones which most successfully engaged Gypsy and Traveller pupils. However, there were a few exceptions to this. Some schools were described as 'better than others' in their willingness and enthusiasm for working with Gypsy and Traveller pupils and their families. The shortfall in knowledge and understanding in schools doing less well had been displayed in the following ways:

- Teaching staff holding caricatured perceptions/stereotypes of Gypsy and Travellers and their cultural background
- A reluctance to offer Gypsy and Traveller children places due to concerns about the effect of poor attendance figures
- Inflexibility surrounding timetabling i.e. some schools were not willing to alter timetables to focus on the areas where pupils needed the greatest attention
- Inflexibility surrounding non-attendance and
- Inadequate responses to reported cases of racially motivated bullying.

Successful practice
'Strengthening teacher-pupils relationships'
Pembrokeshire, TES

Context

A Secondary school teacher was finding it difficult to engage with a few Gypsy and Traveller pupils. The teacher was struggling to establish rapport with these pupils and was finding it difficult to meet their educational needs.

Actions

The TES organised for their teaching staff to teach one of her lessons. While the TES worker delivered the lesson, the main subject teacher sat with the Gypsy and Traveller pupils and worked with them throughout the lesson.

Outcomes

This gave the main subject teacher an opportunity to build rapport and gain a deeper understanding and empathy towards the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils in her class.

Experiences affecting pupils at school

6.8   As outlined earlier, there are interlinked issues which perpetuate the likelihood of further poor attendance, some of these include:

- Friendships - 'falling out' with established friendship circles
- Behavioural issues i.e. getting into fights with peers at school
- Issues with teacher/pupils relationships

6.9   For a Gypsy and Traveller child, having one or more Gypsy and Traveller friend(s) in the same year group was an important source of security. Even where friendships were not based on 'strong ties', having an individual who truly understood what individuals were going through as a Gypsy or Traveller was vital. Crucially, simply knowing that if anything went wrong the pupil could speak to a friend who understood their culture provided a vital source of support, particularly among girls. Thus, when friendships among Gypsy and Traveller children were under threat, this sometimes affected behaviour and coincided with a decline in

attendance. Sometimes, this was also an indicator as to whether pupils were likely to remain in school.

6.10 It was also a TES worker's experience that the extent to which a pupil was integrated and 'achieving well' in school influenced whether they could cope with any friendship issues:

…For children who have been really well integrated and who are doing really well academically then they are more likely to be fine if something like a fall out with friends happens …

Wrexham, TES

6.11 A TES worker in Wrexham further illustrated this in the case of two Gypsy and Traveller friends - one was described as a 'high achiever', while her friend was described as 'trying to fit' in with her peers and achieving at a lower level. While the first pupil had grown away from her friend, the second pupil still relied on knowing where the first pupil was if she missed school. Recently, the TES worker informed the second pupil that her friend had gone travelling for the week. She described the second pupil as 'not taking the news well'. This highlighted the importance of distinguishing between pupils who were travelling from those who were truanting and adopting a transparent process for explaining this to friends. For example, some Gypsy and Traveller pupils felt it was unfair that their friend did not have to go to school that week but they did. The TES worker explained this may be due to pupils wanting to be treated the same and drawing security from the presence of another Gypsy and Traveller in school.

Key practices for success

6.12 The following sections identify the key practices that contributed to reducing the negative impact of these barriers. Identifying any issues faced by Gypsy and Traveller pupils and their families was vital for maintaining levels of attendance and facilitating the likelihood of retention. Being able to identify, and thus mediate and potentially resolve

difficult experiences before they escalated, relied upon several fundamental practices.

Proactive verbal communication

6.13 Proactive communication maximised the opportunity for pupils and families to voice any school related concerns. This included providing support in school and via home-visits. These opportunities allowed TES staff to identify any actual, or potential, challenging experiences at a very early stage. These visits were used to discuss general educational progress of all the children in the family as well as the feelings of parents in relation to an individual child's progress. The visits were informal and presented as a general 'catch-up' with families. Visiting families on a regular basis allowed TES staff to proactively identify any current issues or concerns. Maintaining contact in this way also reaffirmed and strengthened the trust and respect between TES staff and families. For example, a TES worker in Pembroke explained that ongoing contact was 'vital' for the continuity of relationships. This reinforcement of trust increased the likelihood of parents directly contacting TES staff as soon as an issue arose. The combination of directly working with the child and their family enabled staff to gauge a fuller understanding of how the issues were or could affect the 'whole family'.

Successful practice
'Proactive verbal communication'
Pembrokeshire, TES

Context

As part of maintaining relationships with families, a TES worker visits families after pupils receive their school reports. In one case, a pupil was doing really well in her first year at Secondary school and her parents were very pleased with this progress. However, after receiving the school report, the parents were upset with a comment that the pupil would make better progress if she attended more regularly. The pupil had missed school because of ongoing orthodontic work that required travel for each appointment. Given this, the pupil's parents felt that the comment was insensitive.

Actions

During a home visit, the TES worker became aware of the family's concerns with the comment. She applauded the parents for their child's attendance levels and explained that schools were required to meet targets. In this way, the TES worker mediated the situation by reassuring the family and explaining the issue in way that was sensitive to feelings of the family as well articulating the school's perspective. Following the home visit, the TES worker met with teachers to explain how the family had reacted to the comment. It was hoped that this would strengthen the understanding of this pupil and her family.

Outcomes

Due to the immediate dialogue with the family concerning their child's report, the TES worker was able to identify and diffuse a situation that could have had a negative effect upon a pupil's attendance and subsequent retention.

Pastoral support in school

6.14 Pastoral support in school was provided via a TES worker dedicating time slots to be 'on hand' to listen to, offer support and/or reassure Gypsy and Traveller pupils. This could be offered alongside, before or after academic support sessions, or during specifically timetabled periods as 'open hours' for any of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils to use.

For example, in Cardiff this was provided via a Learning Support Assistant who provided both academic and pastoral support. This type of support was often available to all Gypsy and Traveller pupils, irrespective of whether they were currently receiving academic support. In Flintshire, the TES workers explained that where pupils no longer met the criteria for academic support, the informal pastoral support still carried on.

6.15 Gypsy and Traveller pupils were aware of the periods when Traveller workers/teachers were available and used this opportunity to speak to staff about a broad range of issues as and when they arose. For example, pupils spoke to TES staff about planned travelling, difficulties at home and/or friendship issues at school. A TES worker explained the nature of this sort of support as:

They come down and have a chat whenever they want and at the moment things are difficult…They may talk to us about arguments they have had, work they can't do...anything; problems at home, the fact that they haven't got their uniform, or their PE kit, or if they've got into trouble for something...

-Flintshire, TES

6.16 This was not only vital for identifying potential or actual issues at an early stage, but also enabled staff to gain a direct understanding of how the issue was affecting the pupil. For example, a TES worker in Wrexham explained the importance of regular home-visits as:

I do regular visits no matter what...I don't just turn up when there are problems; I'm always checking up… That's how we found that we are keeping on top of things we found out that our best thing to do is to keep doing visits…, just letting them know that you're there and offering any support…

-Wrexham, TES

6.17 In some cases, minor issues were identified and resolved simply by talking them through with TES staff. In these situations providing pupils

with positive reassurance was important for encouraging them to continue to stay in Secondary school. For example, a TES worker noted that the pastoral support they offered was important due to:

I think that they feel safe...if they are upset, or if there is something bothering them, then they come to us...We encourage the children we support to stay in high school, we talk to them about what their aspirations are, we reassure them and say "look you can do this" …Some respond "No at 16 I'll be married Miss"… but we are trying to get them to realise that they have a range of options and that they have choice…and we have been successful…

- Cardiff, TES

6.18 In the majority of cases, to fully identify and understand any issues (in order to mediate and resolve them), working with the pupil in school needed to be supplemented with ongoing communication with the whole family.

Mediating impact

6.19 Successfully mediating and resolving issues required a 'holistic' model of practice, whereby staff supported the family in addition to liaising closely with other staff and agencies. This enabled TES workers to work strategically and put in place the most effective forms of additional support for pupils and their families. This reduced the impact of issues and facilitated effective retention.

Successful practice
'Mediation and school flexibility'
Cardiff, TES
Context The TES supported a bright Gypsy and Traveller pupil and one of the pupil's parents had recently passed away. TES staff who worked closely with the family attended the funeral. Within the Gypsy and Traveller culture, it is traditional to dress in black for an entire year following a death in the community. Subsequently, when returning to school this pupil wanted to wear

a black shirt as a mark of respect.

Actions

The pupil telephoned a TES worker to say that she wanted to wear a black shirt to school. Staff liaised directly with the pupil and her family, before then liaising with the school. During conversations, the family threatened that if the pupil could not wear black, then she would no longer attend school. However, the school was concerned that amending school policy in this way would cause problems for the 1,500 pupils who were expected to wear white shirts. After further liaison, TES staff offered the family a compromise where the pupil could wear the black shirt for a specified period, which was explained to the family in a sensitive way.

Outcomes

The compromise resulted in the pupil remaining in school. The efficient way this was done was crucial to defusing the threat of the pupil's withdrawal from school. Following the end of the agreed period, staff intended to further liaise with the family and the school to continue to sustain that pupil's attendance.

Communication with teaching staff

6.20 Direct communication between TES workers and school staff was an important part of promptly identifying and resolving situations that arose in school. As attendance tended to be an indicator of underlying issues, it was crucial that school staff notified TES workers of falling levels in attendance. Additionally, the two-fold level of contact that TES staff had with both families and staff in schools, meant that TES workers provided a unique understanding of how challenging situations were impacting upon pupils and their families:

> *You need somebody who knows the pupils at school and is able to have a conversations like you would at school, but who also knows the parents and could go down onsite to speak to the parents…*
>
> *-Flintshire, TES*

6.21 The effectiveness of communication was a product of TES workers spending time in both Secondary schools and onsite, as a TES worker in Flintshire explained:

So while a member of staff could be developing a teaching programme, working with a headteacher and other teaching staff, that same person could also be onsite for part of the week....That is really vital for continuity; which is one of the biggest things....

<div align="right">

-TES, Flintshire

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Working strategically: implementing support

6.22 The following factors contribute towards resolving issues and putting in place additional forms of support for families:

- ➢ Meetings with TES workers, teaching staff and families
- ➢ Collaborative working with additional services i.e. Education Social Worker, EWO
- ➢ The involvement of additional agencies e.g. in the instance of referrals
- ➢ Identifying and implementing additional and/or alternative forms of academic support.

Successful practice
'Links with Secondary schools: support strategy and implementation'
Wrexham, TES

Context

A Gypsy and Traveller pupil had transferred to Secondary School and was achieving well academically, despite some issues at home that were beginning to impact upon his behaviour. Following his mother's hospitalisation and due to social influence from Gypsy and Traveller peers who were not in school, the pupil's attendance began to drop.

Actions

- ➢ *Report of non-attendance*

Following the pupil's non-attendance, the headteacher promptly notified the TES worker of the situation. There was no TES worker based in that school and the TES relied on good communication with teaching staff.

- ➢ *Initial home-visit*

Following the report of non-attendance, the TES worker visited the family and was honest and diplomatic about the pupil's declining attendance - explaining

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that the attendance levels had now fallen below what was reasonable to expect. After offering support and reassurance, the TES worker tried to encourage the pupil's re-attendance.

> *Joint home-visits with the Education Social Worker*

Following the initial home-visit with no clear pattern of improvement, the TES worker arranged further home-visits with the local Education Social Worker (ESW). The extent of the pupil's absence and the presence of the ESW meant that this was quite at formal visit.

> *Professionals Meeting/Team Around the Child*

After several home-visits to encourage the pupil to attend school, the TES worker organised a 'professionals' meeting' (Team Around the Child) to resolve the issues and put in place support structures for the pupil and family. The TES worker worked closely with the EWO and the Assistant Head, who was the main school link for the TES.

> *Further Meeting with Parents*

Following the proposed resolutions discussed at the 'professionals' meeting', the TES worker organised a further meeting. The parent was not able to attend a meeting at the school, so the TES worker arranged to 'bring the meeting to her' and took place at her home where she felt most comfortable. The TES worker described her role as 'mediator'; presenting the interests of school staff and those of the parent.

Outcomes

As part of supporting the whole family, the parent was referred to a parenting class. It transpired she was struggling with her own mental health and needed extra support. This was having an effect on issues at home, and was contributing to her son's poor attendance. A personal support plan was developed for her son, who entered a phased return to school.

Successful practice

'Support for Gypsy and Traveller pupils at risk of school exclusion'

Wrexham, TES

Context

A TES worker was concerned that some young people they supported were at risk of disengagement. The pupils' behaviour had been deemed unsatisfactory by a behavioural panel.

Actions

In combination with one-to-one support, the TES worker helped these young people to enrol on a course called 'Unlocking Potential'. The course was one session per week for six weeks during school hours. During this time, pupils undertook activities such as forestry work and small animal care.

Outcomes

The TES worker remarked that the pupils who attended the course were very enthusiastic about the activities that the 'Unlocking Potential' course offered. It was also an interesting break from their mainstream activities and helped them to improve their behaviour and sustain their attendance.

Extracurricular activities

6.23 Participation in extracurricular activities was cited as important for facilitating engagement. Earlier in Primary school, the opportunity for Gypsy and Traveller pupils to participate in extracurricular informal learning activities was important in supplementing learning at school. For pupils in Secondary school, these activities were important for maintaining friendships and in some cases acted as a 'stepping stone' towards better attendance.

Successful practice
'Extra-curricular Activities'
Flintshire, TES

Context

As a way of keeping Gypsy and Traveller pupils engaged, after school extra-curricular activities were organised. Several Gypsy and Traveller girls attended the afternoon 'club' and was perceived as a 'stepping stone' towards re-engagement.

Actions

The activities were based on the interests of the pupils. The pupils learnt how to face-paint as part of a volunteering award which enabled them to volunteer for school fetes and earn money. The group raised money through selling hand-made Christmas cards and cakes. This was an opportunity for the Gypsy and Traveller pupils to spend the afternoon together socialising and doing things they enjoyed.

Outcomes

Pupils enjoyed the club. They raised money for charity and the headteacher praised their efforts. It was a source of positive reinforcement from their peers, families and staff. It also helped to challenge the negative perceptions of school held by parents.

6.24 Where attempts to promote retention in school have failed, there are additional steps that TES workers can take in re-engaging pupils in education following a prolonged period of non-attendance. Even where pupils had been withdrawn from school, efforts to re-engage pupils and their families were vital. Often TES staff described this process as akin to 'building bridges' with both families and the staff in school. As a TES worker explained:

Families need to know that we are supporting them by supporting the children…probably out of respect for us, sometimes the teachers, parents will give school another chance...

-Cardiff, TES

Elective Home Education (EHE)

6.25 In some instances, despite the efforts of the TES to facilitate retention, some pupils were withdrawn from school for EHE. In the same way that non-attendance of one pupil affected the attendance of other pupils, EHE had a 'rolling stone effect' within Gypsy and Traveller communities. In other words, once one family opted for EHE, this news spread around the community and several families followed suit.

Successful Practice

'Identifying an alternative learning pathway' Cardiff, TES
Context A pupil was taken out at the end of Primary school to receive EHE. Though she was no longer in school, the TES continued to engage with her and her family through home-visits to support her home education. *Actions* At the age of 15, the girl expressed an interest in re-engaging with formal education. She wanted to follow a vocational programme that was not accessible via the local Comprehensive school. A small amount of funding was available as part of another project. This was used to fund a hairdressing course at College. The TES worker identified an opportunity for her to work with the then Youth Gateway (now Careers Wales). The TES organised a meeting between the Youth Gateway, the girl and her family and she successfully secured a place with Careers Wales to study hairdressing. *Outcomes* Following a period of EHE, the girl was successfully re-engaged with formal education. Following the hairdressing course at college, she went on to achieve an NVQ level 1, and level 2 with Careers Wales. A further outcome was that Careers Wales changed their practice when working with Gypsy and Traveller pupils, as some pupils needed their support before reaching age 16 in order to have the best opportunity of securing college places.

6.26 This was a particular challenge for TES staff, and one that had only emerged in recent years. TES staff were concerned that the majority of Gypsy and Traveller parents who had opted to EHE were illiterate. Some TES workers raised concerns around issues related to EHE and safeguarding. Additionally, the extent to which these pupils received an education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and needs was a source of concern. The absence of official guidance on this made it increasingly difficult for the TES to re-engage pupils.

Successful Practice
'Re-engagement and strategic working'
Wrexham, TES

Context

The TES found that several EHE pupils were not receiving any form of education at all. The staff were concerned about the effect this was having on families whose children attended school:

> *We are having a knock-on effect from other parents who are sending their children to school and who struggling to keep them there... for the families whose children are not attending all of the time they are saying 'hold on, so-and-so is at home they're doing nothing...why can't we do that'....*

Actions

Following initial home-visits to an EHE family, it was found that the level of education was insufficient. The family were experiencing complex issues that had involved referrals to Mental Health Services. The family was given a timeline to show improvement. In the absence of improvement, the TES worker organised joint meetings with an Education Social Worker (ESW). The meetings were formalised and through this, the TES worker demonstrated that she was still supporting the mother but, at the same time, representing the LA. The ESW informed the parent of the legal procedures that could follow if she did not improve the provision for her daughter.

Alongside the use of other supportive strategies, the identification of a suitable 'back to school plan', encouraged the family to re-engage with school. The plan was used as a guide for a phased return to school, which facilitated re-engagement.

Outcomes

➢ *Successful re-engagement*

➢ *Further development in 'strategic ways of working'*

Based on the success of this case and others, a TES worker had recently organised a strategic meeting with the ESW, EWO and other agencies to discuss a strategic approach to the situation and to put into practice a consistent approach for all Gypsy and Traveller families in the area.

6.27 The effective support outlined in this chapter required staff to work flexibly with families, schools and other services to ensure that any risks to retention were mitigated. The essential factors for success identified include:

- An awareness of the individual needs of Gypsy and Traveller children held by key staff i.e. teaching staff, heads of year, head teachers
- A good knowledge and understanding of Gypsy and Traveller culture within Secondary schools
- Ongoing outreach work with the whole family including where parents had opted to EHE
- Identifying and securing an 'alternative' learning pathway where appropriate, and
- Phased return to school and flexi-schooling.

7. Conclusions and Implications

7.1.   The role of the TES was pivotal in facilitating the engagement of Gypsy and Traveller families at different stages of education. In particular, the research evidenced distinct practices, key factors and ways of working deemed by the TES as successful in promoting engagement.

7.2.   The findings illustrated that challenging perceptions and minimising the effects of negative experiences while at school, involved a multi-faceted and holistic approach to working with the whole family. This encompassed working strategically with other agencies and teachers in implementing and delivering support.

7.3.   This is an inherently complex and challenging process for TES workers. In particular, the findings illuminate the vital importance of both pastoral and academic support for these groups of learners and their families at various stages of education. Academic and pastoral provision intersected with one another and both were needed to reassure and mediate the impact of experiences and perceptions, particularly at Secondary school. This, in turn, required the collaboration, flexibility and understanding of schools in working with TES and for effectively delivering support to meet the individual needs of pupils and families.

7.4.   Examples of good practice demonstrated the value of collaborative working with additional services and schools who shared the responsibility for engaging with families. Although TES workers often were responsible for co-ordinating and delivering most of the support, this also relied on schools and other services collectively recognising the value of their input.

7.5.   Given the complexity and interlinked nature of much good practice and the different contexts across LAs it would be inappropriate to present a

'one-size fits all' account of what works in engaging Gypsy and Traveller families with education. Undoubtedly, Gypsy and Traveller communities have distinct needs; the level and nature of which are likely to vary substantially. However, collectively, the review of literature, survey of LA provision and the interviews with TES workers have confirmed and identified new themes. The research has also identified other issues that require further investigation.

What is the nature of Local Authority provision for Gypsy and Traveller education across Wales?

- Over half of the population supported by LAs were described as 'mostly settled' which suggests a trend of becoming less mobile
- The majority of support is delivered on school premises in classrooms/meeting rooms and strong links are made with a variety of other service providers
- Activities range from negotiating school places to delivering specific transition projects to ensure that transition to Secondary school takes place and that momentum is maintained.

What key practices facilitate engagement?

- Establishing relationships with families early on in Primary years and allowing sufficient time for this. Relationships should be established with the whole family as well as the wider community
- Encouraging school attendance and school routine early on and then proactively seeking to re-engage pupils and families who may later withdraw
- Multi-agency working, including close liaison with EWOs and other key services in providing preparatory support to families prior to transfer. This is important for strategic working and delivering a holistic model of additional support/inventions
- Dedicating resources to outreach work, underpinned by proactive and regular verbal contact with families

- Effective collaboration between Primary and Secondary schools including working with teachers, heads and other key members of staff to secure transfer
- The need for teachers and teaching support staff in schools to have a good knowledge and understanding of Gypsy and Traveller culture
- Schools adopting flexibility to meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller pupils, including ensuring the availability of extra-curricular learning opportunities
- Dedicated staff to be situated in and/or around Secondary schools to deliver pastoral support to pupils, this allows TES staff to mediate the impact of negative experiences
- Adopting a 'whole family' approach to working with Gypsy and Travellers.

How do these key practices work in engaging Gypsy and Traveller families in education?

- By initiating dialogue with families and gaining the trust of Gypsy and Traveller communities; outreach work can reassure parents and this counters negative attitudes towards school
- By delivering effective individual and tailored academic support on an 'individual' needs basis. Transition projects are helpful here, where working directly with the child and visits to Secondary school can change perceptions and provide reassurance
- By providing practical support in gaining access to schools e.g. transport, school places
- By assuming high expectations of Gypsy and Traveller pupils and framing school as a 'positive choice'.

Evaluating the outcomes of provision

7.6.   The report identified some discrepancies between different sources on the number of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in Wales and those supported by LAs. This suggests that the PLASC data may be an underestimate, reflecting the fact that a significant proportion of Gypsy

and Traveller families are not disclosing their child's ethnic status. This reflects findings from a recent Estyn report (2011) that identified that data is not always accurate and has the potential to lead to inequalities in funding. This has implications for the consistency of how data on attainment and attendance is collected, analysed and used. Estyn (2011) acknowledged that although most authorities collect this data, it is often not used well to target where support is most needed or to measure the impact of the support provided.

7.7.   The findings identified much good practice and collectively, these examples suggested successful working even though outcomes could not always be measured. For example, certain interventions resulted in improved attendance, which is a 'hard' and quantifiable indicator of successful engagement. Whilst a school visit might lead to similar success it is a 'soft' and less quantifiable outcome. To improve the effectiveness of their practice, TESs should consider a number of key areas for action (see below) aimed at addressing this. Doing so would allow the TES to gain a comparative understanding of practices. Future practice could then be embedded within a more critical and evidence-based understanding of what works.

7.8.   The research highlighted the broader issue of inclusion. For some TES workers empathising with the feelings of pupils and families at times conflicted with their commitment to the educational needs and rights of every child. There is evidence of schools with an inclusive ethos, with a good knowledge of Gypsy and Traveller culture and the needs of these pupils. It was shown that schools who catered for other vulnerable learners well and had a positive and inclusive ethos were the ones that most successfully engaged Gypsy and Traveller pupils. However, this is not uniform and in a small number of LAs, provision for Gypsy and Traveller pupils is separate to provision for other pupils. Additionally, the implication that Gypsy and Travellers often receive greater flexibility with their schooling begs the question of whether it would be fair to offer this to other groups of vulnerable learners. There is evidence of a

desire to increase the remit of support to other vulnerable and/or low attaining groups. Other examples demonstrated the prioritisation of resources meant that support was provided on a needs basis, rather than just because a pupil was a Gypsy and/or Traveller.

7.9.   The combination of pastoral and academic support offered by the TES is often of a very high standard and worthy of consideration for other models of inclusion by schools, practitioners and other service providers.

Areas for further potential action:

Traveller Education Services:

1. To track the outcomes of the support they provide to families
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of this support in improving attainment and attendance
3. To develop an evidence-based understanding of effective practice and successful outcomes when engaging with families

Schools:

4. To fulfil their role in working with families and facilitating attendance, transition, retention and re-engagement
5. To work closely with the TES and other services in implementing and delivering academic and pastoral support for Gypsy and Traveller pupils

Local Authorities:

6. To improve and develop centralised systems for collecting, storing, retrieving and analysing attainment and attendance data across LAs
7. To continue to maintain discrete TESs and levels of support for this vulnerable learner group.

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Annex 1 - Methodology

Research design

A sequential and multi-method research design was used. The research used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. This incorporated:

i) a systematic search and review of the literature

ii) an online survey to LAs in receipt of the Gypsy and Traveller Education Grant and

iii) in-depth interviews with TES workers in four LAs.

Literature review

A systematic search was undertaken to identify literature relevant to the topic of Gypsy and Traveller education and engagement to place this research in the wider evidence base. The review also aimed to source examples of good practice.

Search criteria

The search terms used included:

Gyps* or Roma* AND Traveller*) AND (education OR learning OR school*) AND (engagement OR participat* OR involvement OR attend* OR inclusion OR attitudes)

Documents were drawn from academic research and UK and Welsh Government sources, including journals and books. Focus was maintained on research generated from interview, case study research, official statistics and research reports published by key stakeholders. Newspapers and 'lay sources' of information including social media were excluded. Due to divergent national contexts and demographics, only research published over the last 15 years and carried out in the United Kingdom was included.

Search engines/databases used:

Google Scholar, Science Direct, Web of Science, Assia, ERIC, British Education Index, Education Online, OECDiLibrary, Social Care Online,

Ingenta.

Websites used:
National Association of Teachers of Travellers, What's Working Project, Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and Other Travellers, National Foundation for Educational Research, Department for Education and Skills (Wales), Department for Education (England), Save the Children.

Using the information from abstracts, sources deemed relevant to attainment, attendance, transition, retention and engagement were selected for review. Sources were analysed and grouped thematically using a qualitative data analysis package (NVivo 10). Given the focus of the project, the purpose of the literature review was to enhance the key themes emerging from the primary research.

Online survey

Based on the research question 'What is the nature of LA provision for Gypsy and Traveller education across Wales?' an online survey was developed to obtain a broad picture of service provision, within which the qualitative findings could be situated. The survey included questions on population characteristics, the number of pupils supported and links with other services (see Annex 1 for further details).

Data collection

The survey was circulated electronically to the 19 LAs who claim the Gypsy and Traveller Education Grant. The target respondents were the TES leads/coordinators. Seven weeks were allowed for responses. Following this, the data were quality assured and respondents who answered less than 80% of the questions were asked to complete and/or retake the survey. Sixteen responses were received.

Analysis

The data was downloaded into an excel spreadsheet. Where appropriate, findings are presented using illustrative tables and graphs.

In-depth interviews

To explore further what works in engaging Gypsy and Traveller families in education, interviews were also undertaken. The sample of LAs was selected by the Welsh Government to ensure a broad spectrum of service provision. These were Cardiff, Pembrokeshire, Wrexham and Flintshire and five interviews were carried out in these areas.

The TES workers spent a substantial part of their time working on the ground to support Gypsy and Travellers. This included teaching and supporting the children academically and working with families on site. The interviews took place on school premises. The researcher wore a name badge to explicitly state her status as a researcher for the benefit of other members of staff, parents and pupils.

Prior to the interviews, participants were asked to read an information sheet and consent form (see Annex 2 for details). Informed verbal and/or written consent was obtained prior to commencing the interviews. The interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone, with the permission of participants.

The interviews were conducted one-to-one or in small groups. Informal interviews were also undertaken with a headteacher and two Gypsy and Traveller parents. Participants were asked a series of open questions (see Appendix 3) regarding the support they provided and the ways in which they engaged Gypsy and Traveller families at different stages of education. The interviews lasted between one hour and fifteen minutes and two hours and thirty minutes. In the interviews with two participants, care was taken to ensure that both staff were given the opportunity to answer and elaborate. In some instances, this strengthened the internal validity of data, as staff agreed and/or challenged each other's responses to provide a more holistic response.

Data analysis

The interview data was fully transcribed and uploaded to NVivo 10. The analysis focussed on explaining practices which facilitated engagement in a way which was more than simply factual and captured how and why the individuals worked with families.

A thematic analysis of the data was carried out which was iterative and data-led. This involved a number of key stages of 'explanation building' whereby different levels of description and interpretation were assumed:

Stage 1: Exploratory/Illustrative

Each interview was read and annotated individually. The annotations recorded key themes and descriptive interpretation. The outcomes of initiatives illustrated by participants were identified.

Stage 2: Explanatory

This stage involved collectively analysing the descriptive annotations to identify the relationships and key ways of working linked to the successful outcomes identified in stage 1. The implicit and explicit context and actions, and key conditions that were integral to the outcomes of successful practice were identified. In this stage, the analysis sought to construct an analytical account of how and why key practices 'worked' in engaging families.

Step 3: Narrative

Based on the themes generated, a coding framework was constructed to code sections of the raw data and to organise the findings within the key stages in education. The narrative intended to capture the complexity and interlinked nature of practice. Detailed examples of successful practice were used to highlight key themes.

Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families

You are being invited to take part in this research

Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families

Traveller Education Service Leads/ Head Coordinators across Wales are being invited to take part in research on 'Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families'.

The research is part of a PhD Internship project commissioned on behalf of the Welsh Government and is co-funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The research aims to identify and evaluate what works in engaging Gypsy and Traveller families in education- with a specific focus on attendance, transfer and retention. The project involves this survey and case studies to showcase successful initiatives that are primarily delivered by the Traveller Education Support Service. For the purposes of raising Gypsy and Traveller attainment, increasing attendance and promoting effective transfer and retention across Wales, this research will help identify the key issues that will be used to inform policy development in this area.

The survey is quite short. It should take around 15-25 minutes to complete. Your responses will be treated as strictly confidential and securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act. No individuals/employees will be directly identified or identifiable in the research report or in any other reports or publications. Where participants choose to provide a contact email address, this will be used to email the recipient information about participating in the second stage of the research for their consideration. Material will not be used for any other purposes and will remain confidential. Should you have any further questions or comments please email:
amber.fensham@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Your participation is greatly appreciated

☐ I am a Service Lead/Head Coordinator employed by the Traveller Education Service (TES)
☐ I agree to take part in this study

1. Which Local Authority does your work directly support?

2. Which of the following Gypsy and Traveller groups are currently known to reside within this Local Authority? (Please tick all that apply)
   ☐ Traveller of Irish Heritage
   ☐ 'New' Traveller
   ☐ Occupational Traveller
   ☐ Other Traveller
   ☐ British Gypsy/Gypsy Roma
   ☐ Gypsy/Gypsy Roma from other countries
   ☐ Other Gypsy/Gypsy Roma

3. How would you describe the mobility of the majority of Gypsy and Traveller families that you work with? (Please select one option)
   ☐ Mostly settled -i.e. Families residing in bricks and mortar accommodation rarely/never travel
   ☐ Partially settled/partially nomadic – i.e. Families who settle for several months in the year but tend to follow traveling patterns during the summer
   ☐ Fully nomadic i.e. Families who are highly mobile, often moving from one destination to the next within matter of weeks/days
   ☐ Other (write in)

4. How many registered Gypsy and Traveller children pupils do you directly support? (Please indicate the level and number of students who currently receive support)
   ☐ Nursery/Pre-school:
   ☐ Primary:
   ☐ Secondary:
   ☐ Post compulsory:

5. Do you currently support any Gypsy and Traveller children/ young persons who are temporarily de-registered, or who receive alternative provision or Elective Home Education?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

6. How many Gypsy and Traveller children/ young persons receiving alternative provision or Elective Home Education etc. does the Traveller Education Support Service in this Local Authority currently support?

7. Where does the Traveller Education Service deliver the majority of their support to Gypsy and Traveller pupils in this Local Authority?
   ☐ In school classrooms/meeting rooms
   ☐ Discrete unit/or centre
   ☐ On Gypsy Traveller sites
   ☐ Other (write in)

8. What links does this Traveller Education Service share with other services and/or agencies? (Please describe)

9. Does the Traveller Education Service working in this Local Authority monitor the attendance and attainment of the Gypsy and Traveller pupils it supports?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

10. Please briefly describe how this data is collected (write in):

11. Can you identify any recent targeted initiatives or interventions which have, since implementation, been successful in engaging Gypsy and Traveller pupils and/or their families with formal education?

12. Using the following criteria, please briefly outline any successful initiatives/interventions that your team has been involved in delivering (write in):

Successful initiative/intervention
Objective:
1. What were the aims of the initiative/intervention? – What did you want to change?
2. Who was the initiative targeted at? i.e. individual/family/community
Action:
3. How was this initiative/intervention delivered?
4. Who was involved in the delivery?
Outcomes:
5. Were the aims of the initiative/intervention met?
6. What changed as a result of the initiative/intervention?
7. What kind of engagement did the initiative/intervention facilitate? e.g. increased attendance, securing transfer, changing attitudes and values towards learning etc.
Successful initiatives/interventions continued...

13. In thinking about the strategy, action and outcomes of the successful initiatives/interventions that you outlined, what underlying components do you think were most important to facilitating successful engagement? (i.e. relationships, communication, resources, etc.)

14. The anonymised responses from this survey will be used to complement the second stage of this research-involving several case study visits with a sample of Local Authorities. Please indicate if you would like to receive a summary of the research findings.

    ☐ Yes please, email me a summary of the findings (write in)
    ☐ No thanks

Thank you kindly for your participation.

Annex 3 – Consent Form

Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families

You are being invited to take part in this research

About the project

The research is part of an ESRC doctoral Internship hosted by the Welsh Government. It aims to explore what works in engaging Gypsy and Traveller families with formal education and learning. The project will use case study research to showcase successful initiatives- primarily delivered by, or on behalf of the Traveller Education Service. Understanding the first-hand experiences of staff who work directly with Gypsy and Traveller children and families is a substantial component to this. The findings of this work will contribute to the future development of evidence based policy. For the purposes of raising Gypsy and Traveller attainment, increasing attendance and promoting effective transfer and retention, this research is much needed.

Who is being invited to participate?

- Staff working for, or in collaboration with the Traveller Education Support Services in Wales.

What will it involve?

I would like to talk to you to hear your first-hand experiences, thoughts and views on what works in engaging Gypsy Traveller families with formal education- with a focus on the initiatives that you have been involved in delivering to Gypsy and Traveller pupils at risk of disengagement. This will involve a telephone interview lasting between 30 minutes to and hour. We can arrange to speak at a time most convenient to you.

Will the things I say be kept private?

- Interviews will be strictly confidential. This means that you, other staff members and Gypsy Traveller families will not be named or identifiable in any way.

What will I do with the information?

With your permission, I will audio-record our conversation so that I have a record of what was said. The interview data will be stored securely, in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act. For the purpose of sharing

successful practice, the interview data will be used as part of a research report which will be published by the Welsh Government and widely circulated to service providers and practitioners across Wales.

What happens if I change my mind about taking part?
Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind at any time you can withdraw without having to give a reason. You can also email, write or call me at anytime to let me know if you no longer wish to be involved the research.

Who am I?
My name is Amber Fensham-Smith. I am a doctoral student at Cardiff University, School of Social Sciences. My PhD specialises in alternative forms of learning and digital technologies. I am passionate about striving towards the equality of educational opportunity for all persons- irrespective of socio-economic, ethnic or cultural background.

Contact Information
If you have any questions or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me via telephone, email or post using the details printed above.

CONSENT FORM:

Please read the following statements and either i) sign below or ii) confirm verbally that you agree to participate in an interview conducted by Mrs Amber Fensham-Smith, Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government.

On behalf of myself and other staff/persons present

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this study. I have been given enough time to consider my participation and have had the opportunity to ask any questions that I may have, and that these questions have been answered satisfactorily

2. I consent to the interview being taped using a digital recording device. I understanding that I will be offered a summary of the findings

3. I understand that anonymous extracts transcribed from out discussion will in the interview will be for a research report and for any other further publications produced by the Welsh Government

4. I understand that my participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw at any point

Annex 4 - Qualitative Topic Guide

Gypsy and Traveller Education: Engaging Families

Example Interview schedule

(For Traveller Education Service Leads/Coordinators)

[INTRO- introduces research, explain confidentiality, consent forms]

1. Could tell me a bit about this Traveller Education Service (background)?

2. Where do you primarily deliver you services i.e. in centre/school/unit?

3. How would you describe your role within the Traveller Education Service?

4. How would you describe the roles of the other staff working in this team?
   I.   Job responsibilities, etc.?

5. How would you describe the Gypsy and Traveller communities that you work with?
   I.   How do families' tend to self-identify?
   II.   Are the families nomadic/ settled, travelling patterns etc.?

6. How many Gypsy and Traveller pupils do you support (both registered/deregistered)?
   I.   What data is this based on? Do you monitor attendance?
   II.   Probe, has this figure changed in recent years?

7. How would you describe the types of support that you primarily deliver to Gypsy and Traveller pupils (in school, on-site)?
   I.   How is this Traveller Education Service involved at the different stages of a Gypsy Traveller pupil's education?

8. What are some of the major targets/goals that your team are currently working towards?
   I.   Achievement targets for Gypsy Traveller children?

9. What are some of the greatest issues facing Gypsy and Traveller pupils in relation to school attendance, transfer and retention in this area?
   I. Where do you think these challenges stem from?

10. Can you recall any specific examples of when you/your staff delivered an initiative or intervention in response to an education/school related issue facing a Gypsy Traveller pupil?
   I. Can you describe the issue?
   II. How were you first made aware of the issue?
   III. What actions were taken?
   IV. Why did you choose to take those actions as opposed to others?
   V. Who was involved in delivering the actions/making changes on the ground'?
   VI. What were the outcomes as a result of the actions taken?
   VII. Why do you think that situation resulted in the way that it did (as opposed to any other way)?

11. How do you support some of the Gypsy and Traveller parents in this area?
   I. Do you run events, meetings etc.?
   II. What do you think this support means to Gypsy and Traveller parents?

12. Can you identify any challenges that you have been faced with when working with Gypsy and Traveller parents in relation to their child's school attendance and/ transfer?
   I. Can you describe the issue?
   II. How were you first made aware of the issue?
   III. What actions were taken?
   IV. Why did you choose to take those actions as opposed to others?
   V. Who was involved in delivering the actions/making changes on the ground'?
   VI. What were the outcomes as a result of the actions taken?
   VII. Why do you think that situation resulted in the way that it did (as opposed to any other way)?

13. How would you describe the relationship between Gypsy Travellers and the non-traveller communities in this area?
   I. Why do you think this is the case?

14. Based on the our discussion, what would say 'works best' in engaging Gypsy and Traveller families with formal education and learning?
   I. Why do you think this is the case? (probe. i.e. why do you think certain approaches/relationships etc. work better than others in facilitating engagement)