

**Supporting Gypsy, Traveller, Roma,
Showmen and Boaters (GTRSB) in
Higher Education: A Handbook for
University Staff in the United Kingdom
on Developing Good Practice**



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Front Cover Art

Impression Sunset by Daniel Baker, 2017, enamel and silver leaf on Plexiglass, 100cm x 100cm

The title of this work references the painting by Claude Monet, "Impression Sunrise" which signalled the birth of the Impressionist Movement in Europe in the late 19th Century. Here a monochrome graphic image of a bender tent is shown within a brightly symbolic landscape comprised of pivotal art historical motifs including modernist blocks of colour, abstract painterly drips, and graffiti spray paint.

Bender tents were regularly used as dwellings by Romanies during the Impressionist period and the artist's ancestors are recorded as living in such homes on Mitcham Common near London during the 1881 UK census.

By embedding the image of a Romani dwelling within an array of key art historical references the work seeks to locate the Roma presence within key moments of societal transformation - not only to affirm our place in the world but also to place us firmly within the historical narratives from which we have been regularly excised. By re-contextualising our past, we create the foundations for reimagining our futures, futures in which we are fully recognised for our participation as valued citizens. This work attempts to relocate Roma within historical narrative to better understand our path forward.

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Foreword

Baroness Janet Whitaker



This handbook contains well-researched and illuminating material on the real situation of Gypsies, Travellers, Roma, Showmen and Boaters, as well as means to enable people from these communities to benefit from and contribute to higher education in this country. It is a basis for positive discussion to remedy the problems these small minorities so often and so unfairly face in trying to access higher education. Dr Morgan and her colleagues have also done higher education a service in this focus on an often-neglected aspect of inclusivity. It is clear from the introduction that action should be based on understanding the diversity in the cultures of GTRSB people, and emphasis is rightly placed

on the persistent prejudice and discrimination they have all faced, with associated lack of achievement in school education, a crucial passport people need to thrive in our society. One of the negative consequences is the under-representation of all these groups in higher education.

As Chelsea McDonagh points out, despite small recent improvements, there is still a clear deficit. Yet current university access and participation plans rarely focus on these communities, even though the Office for Students has identified the gap. Although Gypsies, by extension Roma, and Irish Travellers are legally identified ethnic minorities, they tend not to be included in race equality charters, nor in most anti-racist research. The absolute numbers of each population are small, but the proportion which is excluded from higher education is far higher than for most other minorities. They are also left out of narratives that assume that all minorities which are discriminated against are non-white. Their history and cultures are ignored in our national story, even that of those groups that have been here for centuries. There is a compelling argument from social justice - to challenge negative stereotypes, to disaggregate statistics to reflect reality, and to pay professional attention, on all sides, to enabling the members of these communities to play their full part in our higher education world.

The pioneering work of Buckinghamshire New University in launching a campaign to promulgate a Pledge committing institutions to a programme to widen access, which I was delighted to help launch at the House of Lords, has shown the way, with some heartening successes, and Professor Margaret Greenfields, who was instrumental in the development of the campaign, sets out with her colleagues the issues for implementation. But the alienation still experienced by many of those who have succeeded in breaking through the barriers, so poignantly described in chapter four, needs persistence, information and understanding of inclusivity, of which the authors have found some helpful examples.

Dr Morgan and the other authors have provided many examples of practical measures for education professionals to take, to begin to put right centuries of injustice, as well as sources of further information, advice, and partnership. It is now up to the world of higher education to reflect on these findings and act.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Julia Morgan, Olga Fuseini, Kim Gardiner, and David Smith

The 2021 census estimates the population of England and Wales at 59,597,300 people, with approximately 100,981 people identifying as Roma (0.17%) and 67,768 people identifying as Gypsy or Irish Traveller (0.11%) (ONS, 2022a). For Northern Ireland, the figures were 2,609 people who identified as Irish Traveller (0.14%) and 1,529 people who identified as Roma (0.08%) (NISRA, 2022). In relation to Scotland, the statistics for the census, which was carried out in 2022, are not available at this present time (available Summer 2024) but 2011 census data shows that 4,200 people (0.1% of the population) identified as Gypsy or Traveller (Scottish Government, 2015); Roma as an ethnic category were not included in the 2011 census. It is important to note, however, that these figures are highly likely to be an under-count as not all those who identify as Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller may have disclosed their ethnic identity with alternative methods for calculating the size of these populations suggesting numbers of up to 200,000 Roma (Brown et al., 2013) and 300,000 Gypsies and Travellers (Traveller Movement, 2022).

Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen, and Boaters often abbreviated to “GRT” or “GTRSB” are umbrella terms, like terminology such as BAME, which describe diverse communities. Whilst umbrella terms such as ‘GRT’ are often used in terms of policy and administration, they can also be misleading, and are disliked by some community members. Firstly, such categories are generally imposed by officials, policy makers and academics from outside of those communities and secondly, they often conflate different experiences and heritages as one leading to homogeneity, stereotyping, and essentialism (Surdu, 2016). Moreover, intersectionality, in relation to gender, social class, social-economic status, nationality, sexuality, disability, and age, for example, is of note and may lead to differential lived experiences.

Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen, and Boaters are, therefore, diverse groups and to aid understanding we attempt in the table below to give an overview of these varied groups. However, this can be fraught with difficulties and can lead to simplistic understandings of complex identities and histories. Keeping this in mind the communities may include:

Roma	<p>In the United Kingdom (UK), Roma tends to refer to those communities who have migrated to the UK from East & Central Europe since the mid-1990s and in increasing numbers following the expansion of the European Union (EU). As a result, a range of languages including Romani are spoken with a number of national identities being evident. Most Roma in the UK live in houses/flats but research has indicated a rise in homelessness amongst some migrant Roma as well as sub-standard and overcrowded housing (Cioarta, 2023; Finney et al., 2023); an over-representation, for some, in precarious low paid jobs, and a lack of access to English language skills support which impacted, for some, on accessing services such as healthcare and education, the latter being especially the case for women (Brown et al., 2016). However, whilst recognising that this may be the case for some Roma, it is important to avoid essentialising narratives of disadvantage as ‘the Roma experience’.</p> <p>It should also be noted that Roma, itself, is an umbrella term, and includes different groups of Romani origin with diverse and heterogenous cultures, languages, lifestyles, and heritages such</p>
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	<p>as “Roma, Sinti, Kalé, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as Traveller populations¹ (gens du voyage, Gypsies, Camminanti)” (European Commission, n.d). Roma are Europe’s largest ethnic minority group with approximately 10-12 million Roma living in Europe (European Commission n.d). The term Roma was agreed upon as an international term at the 1st World Romani Congress, however, Roma is a contested term, amongst some, due to the heterogeneity of groups which it covers. Many Roma have faced considerable state sanctioned social exclusion, segregation, assimilation, categorization, surveillance, social control, marginalization, and racism across Europe including being the subject of moral panics, discrimination, and anti-Roma discourses (Clark, 2016; Brown et al., 2013). There have been several EU-led policy initiatives around integration and inclusion of Roma in Europe, but these policies have been critiqued as paternalistic civilising processes, rooted in a deficit model that represent Roma as lacking agency “a ‘vulnerable population’ that has to be assisted in their inclusion into society” (Rostas et al., 2015:8).</p>
<p>Romani² Gypsies including English and</p>	<p>Romani Gypsies have a long history of living in the UK. They are said to have originated, like European Roma, in India</p>

¹ The term Roma in the European Commission definition also includes Gypsies and Travellers from the United Kingdom. However, in the UK as stated above Roma normally refers to Roma who have recently migrated from Europe.

² May also be spelt Romany.

<p>Welsh Romani Gypsies (or Welsh Kalé).</p>	<p>(Hancock, 2002; Fraser, 1995; Mendizabal et al., 2012), though this is not accepted by all scholars who have provided alternative explanations as to their origins (Belton, 2005; Willems, 1998).</p> <p>Some community members may speak AngloRomani or Romani or in the case of Welsh Gypsies, Welsh Romanus.</p> <p>Wider social, political, and economic changes have made it difficult for many Romani Gypsies to maintain their cultural nomadic heritage and many Romani Gypsies, like other Travelling peoples, live in houses ('bricks and mortar') or on permanent private or local authority sites with some travelling over the summer periods. Other Romani Gypsies, however, may live a mostly nomadic life living on roadside and in short-term transit sites. Regardless of this, nomadism is still seen, by many, as a key component of ethnic identity regardless of whether people travel or not.</p>
<p>Irish Travellers/Pavee</p>	<p>Irish Travellers originated in Ireland. Many Irish Travellers may speak Gaelic derived Gammon or Cant. They have a history of cultural and economic nomadism but have also, like Romani Gypsies, been impacted by the loss of traditional stopping places, economic changes which have impacted on traditional occupations, insecure and culturally inappropriate accommodation, state social control, and in the UK, legislation such as The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (UK Parliament, 2022). Please see Cork Traveller Women's</p>

	<p>Network for more information in additional resources (appendix 3).</p>
<p>Scottish Travellers and Gypsies</p>	<p>Scottish Gypsy/Travellers have been recognised as a minority ethnic group by the Scottish government since 2008, following an industrial tribunal case (Ken MacLennan v Gypsy Traveller Education and Information Project, 2008) held in Aberdeen (Greenhall & Willers, 2020). Scottish Gypsy/Travellers are very diverse communities but include groups such as Lowland Gypsy/Travellers, who may share some heritage and intermarriage with English Romani Gypsies (Romanichals) and Highland Travellers (Ceàrdannan) who may have origins across Scandinavia and other parts of Northern Europe (Foster & Norton, 2012). Some Scottish Gypsy/Travellers may also refer to themselves, in Cant, as Nachins or Nawkins.</p>
<p>Showmen</p>	<p>Showmen are Travelling people ‘who gain their livelihoods (occupations) by attending funfairs’ (The Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain, n.d). Many may live on yards during the winter months when they are not travelling for work. Showmen have campaigned to be able to specify their identity in the census 2021 and this was collected under the ‘other White background’ ethnicity category. However, ethnicity census data that specifically relates to Showmen has not been disaggregated from ‘other White background’ data.</p>

Boaters, Bargees	Historically travelled for work and live on boats and may refer to themselves as Bargee Travellers (National Bargee Travellers Association, n.d). A submission to the UK Parliament by the National Bargee Travellers Association (2017) highlights that many Bargee Travellers are on low incomes, in many cases lack access to basic facilities, experience difficulties in accessing services, and are subjected to punitive measures.
New Travellers	Travelling lifestyle, often seen as cultural Travellers, rather than ethnic minority Travellers, but many will refer to themselves as Travellers (Mulcahy et al., 2017). Many have travelled for generations (Clark, 1997).

Roma, Irish and Scottish Travellers, and Romani Gypsies including Welsh Kalé are recognised as ethnic minority groups under the Equality Act (2010) in England, Wales, and Scotland³. As such they are protected groups under the Race Relations Act (1976) (amended 2000) and Equality Act (2010) in relation to racism, hate crimes, and discrimination. Showmen, Bargee Travellers, and New Travellers are not a protected ethnicity category under the Equality Act (2010) but often face prejudice, discrimination, and other intersectional inequalities. Limited academic literature is available on the experiences of Showmen, Bargee Travellers, and New Travellers.

³ In Northern Ireland, Irish Travellers are specifically mentioned under the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1997/869/article/5/made>

There is a long history of stigmatisation, dehumanisation, marginalisation and hostility towards Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities both in the UK and in Europe (Powell, 2008). This discrimination, othering and attributed outsider status has been resistant to change (Powell & Lever, 2017) and has been called ‘the last acceptable form of racism’ in the UK (Traveller Movement, 2017); being insidious and infiltrating all parts of society including the public psyche. Recent research has found, for example, that approximately 62% of Gypsy and Travellers in Britain have experienced a racist assault (defined as insult, property damage, or physical attack) (Finney, et al., 2023) and that people in Britain (44%) are more likely to express negative comments about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities than any other Equality Act protected ethnic group or community (Abrams et al., 2018). Moreover, a 2018 YouGov poll found that 66% of people in the UK viewed Romani Gypsies, Roma and Irish Traveller groups as not being ethnic minorities (Gov UK, 2022)⁴. This symbolically violent denial of ethnic minority status and identity can result in racism towards these groups being unchallenged or not taken seriously. The latter is reinforced when the lived experiences of everyday racism, which many Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers experience, are dismissed and defined as prejudice rather than racism.

Why the need for a handbook

The Census 2021 (ONS, 2023) for England and Wales shows us that out of all ethnic groups Gypsy, and Irish Travellers are least likely to have a level 4 qualification and above (defined as Degree (BA, BSc), higher degree (MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ level 4 to 5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, professional qualifications (for example, teaching, nursing, accountancy) with 11% of Gypsy and Irish Travellers reporting this qualification.

⁴ Northern Ireland’s Equality Commission’s Equality Awareness Survey (2018) found that Irish Travellers, Roma, Asylum Seekers/Refugees, migrant workers, and minority ethnic groups were the most negatively viewed groups.

This is substantially below the average for England and Wales (34%), whilst the percentage for Roma is 32%. Moreover, Gypsy, Roma and Irish Travellers are much more likely to report having no qualifications than any other ethnic group (Gypsy and Irish Travellers approximately 57% whilst Roma 31%, average for England and Wales 18%). In addition, the Office for Students Equality Opportunity Risk Register for students, identifies Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boater students as a group of students who do not experience equality of opportunity in higher education⁵ in relation to access, participation, and progression (Office for Students, 2023) whilst the Race Equality Charter highlights the importance of the higher education academy identifying barriers for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students and staff within higher education.

Whilst widening participation in higher education in the UK has been on the policy agenda for many years this focus has not engaged, in any meaningful way, with increasing university access and participation for GTRSB⁶ communities, with these groups often remaining invisible in policy discussions as well as in university access and participation plans (Atherton, 2020) including outreach. This invisibility and lack of concern, in relation to outcomes and life chances, was highlighted in the 2019 report by the Women and Equalities Committee where they conclude that Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities have been ‘comprehensively failed’ by UK policy makers.

There are numerous reasons that have been put forward for the under-representation of GTRSB communities in higher education, including a lack of policy focus and institutional responses; an emphasis on vocational work and jobs within the communities; fear of

⁵ Office for Students applies to England only. This under-representation in higher education has also been found in Ireland where Irish Travellers and Roma have been identified as a priority group (HEA, 2022).

⁶ In this handbook we will use the term GTRSB unless we are talking about specific communities. This is for ease of expression. We recognise the difficulties with the term and the diverse nature of the communities that this term encompasses.

education leading to assimilation and loss of culture; poorer school experiences, attendance and outcomes; financial worries about the cost of education; and fear of discrimination, hostility, and racism (Mulcahy et al., 2017; Forster & Gallagher, 2020; ONS, 2022b; D’Arcy, & Galloway, 2018). Moreover, under-representation of GTRSB communities in higher education is often explained away by ‘stock stories’ such as communities ‘not valuing education’ (D’Arcy, 2017; D’Arcy, & Galloway, 2018) or a ‘lack of aspiration’, which attributes responsibility to individuals and communities rather than to structural factors, including racism and discrimination, which are barriers to participation. In addition, the literature on the experiences of university students, from GTRSB communities, indicates that there is a lack of understanding and support within institutions and from staff about GTRSB cultures and lifestyles; issues in reconciling home and university life; worries about finances and about ‘being good enough’; a lack of positive representations in university spaces and curriculums; as well as experiences of anti-Gypsy and anti-Roma rhetoric (Mulcahy et al., 2017; Forster & Gallagher, 2020; Morgan et al., 2023). Misunderstandings and lack of knowledge about the communities can also result in misinformation influencing higher education practice and strategy. For example, barriers to participation in education may be ascribed to community nomadism even when families are ‘settled’ resulting in other barriers to participation being mis-recognised (D’Arcy, 2017; Myers, 2018).

This handbook was developed in collaboration with Gypsy, Roma, Showmen, and Traveller students, former students, and university staff as a resource to facilitate reflection amongst university senior management, and university staff on how they support GTRSB students in accessing higher education through outreach and other initiatives and how support and mentoring offered, during their time at university, can be strengthened. Furthermore, it offers a space for university staff to be reflexive about how they represent GTRSB students in the curriculum and knowledge production as well as in university policy including anti-

racist policies, and initiatives which focus on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), awarding gaps and de-colonialising the curriculum. This brief resource is, therefore, offered as a starting point for further reflection and discussion rather than an end point.

Overview of chapters

Chapter 2 by Clark offers some context by focusing on housing, health, and education in relation to policy and practice that both promote social inclusion and reduce social exclusion. Chapter 3 by McDonagh gives an overview of higher education experiences of GTRSB students. Chapter 4, by Greenfields, Holmes & Price offers some suggestions on how university professional services and administration staff can support GTRSB students whilst at university. Chapter 5, by Marsh, Hulmes, & Peacock, continues by exploring the inclusive curriculum and offers some suggestions to lecturers on how GTRSB communities can be represented in a positive way in the curriculum challenging deficit stereotypes. Chapter 6, by Morgan and Stubbs, relates to higher education strategy, policy, and equality initiatives. This is followed by resources including an aide memoire, to support reflection and reflexivity and links to organisations and further readings.

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Chapter 2: A Situational Policy Analysis of Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen, and Boater (GTRSB) Communities in the UK: Exclusion and Inclusion in Housing, Health, and Education

Colin Clark

This brief contextual chapter aims to build on and develop the overview of Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen, and Boater (GTRSB) communities in the UK that was offered in the previous chapter. As a key concern here, the focus is with policy and practice that both promotes social inclusion and reduces social exclusion. A range of examples will be drawn on from across the UK, including some references to the European context, to show how discrimination and prejudice in a variety of public policies and their service delivery is endemic, but also to show that there is some evidence of innovation and best practice when it comes to the operation and implementation of social and public policies that can assist GTRSB inclusion. The areas examined in this chapter are largely taken from the policy worlds of housing, health, and education. Before moving on, it must be said that this brief review is not designed to be exhaustive and is highly selective, but the examples chosen are illustrative of wider phenomenon that hopefully reflect some of the main concerns of the communities themselves, as well as policymakers and other agencies/officials who are charged with trying to construct and operationalise policies that ‘do more good than harm’ (Smith-Merry, 2020).

Situating GTRSB communities in the UK and Europe

Much has been written about GTRSB communities, in both a UK and European context, regarding social inclusion and exclusion (James, 2022; Kende et al., 2021). This is also true when looking specifically at the areas of concern of this chapter - housing, health, and education - and maintaining a strictly policy and practice focus and analysis (Alexiadou, 2023; Ryder, 2024). This section will not repeat what the academic literature has to say on

such matters, but rather will offer some broad thoughts on the wisdom and benefits of adopting an exclusion/inclusion perspective on policy issues and viewing such a sociological dichotomy through a lens of both anti-racist practice and an understanding and awareness of the consequences of what has been termed ‘antigypsyism’ (Rovid, 2021).

Why are anti-racist practices and antigypsyism important to be mindful of when thinking about inclusion and exclusion when it comes to GTRSB communities in the UK? As will be shown in the sections below, both issues have a deep connection with either encouraging and promoting inclusion (anti-racist practices) or excusing and allowing for policies and practices of exclusion to take root (antigypsyism). This critical perspective is a helpful tool when determining the place and value of policies that are designed to serve the needs of the GTRSB communities.

To begin with anti-racist practices, what we are discussing here is being able to identify, locate and take steps to actively challenge and oppose racism at individual, institutional, and structural levels. More than this, it is also about being able to enact a change of those behaviours, policies, beliefs, and practices that either consciously or subconsciously perpetuate racist ideas, processes, and systems (Patel, 2022). Further, engaging in anti-racist practice means taking action and not being a bystander. It is an active and lived process that can lead to uncomfortable and challenging conversations with individuals in positions of power and authority. Although the engaged social and political activism of Black Lives Matter has brought anti-racist practice back into the spotlight, such practices have existed for many years and is also evident in work with GTRSB communities in the UK and Europe, especially in practice-based areas such as social work and education (Allen & Hulmes, 2021; Morgan et al., 2023).

Regarding antigypsyism, this is an often fiercely contested term, in both academic and policy enclaves, that nonetheless has entered social, public, and political environments and debates in recent years, especially in the European Union and via international non-governmental organisations (such as the Council of Europe and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance). As an ideology, system, and network of interlinked practices, of course, antigypsyism has existed for many centuries with both its histories and contemporary prevalence being explored and discussed widely in the academic literature (Rostas, 2020; Rovid, 2022). However, what is antigypsyism and what bearing does it have on GTRSB communities and their experiences of exclusion and inclusion? Does it apply across all the GTRSB communities we are discussing here, or some more than others? Essentially, antigypsyism - or anti-Roma discrimination as some prefer (Kummerle, 2022) - is a *consequence* of vocalising and actioning policies and practices that serve to exclude, marginalise, oppress, devalue and otherwise disrespect GTRSB cultures, identities, lifestyles, and modes of being and living. Such verbal articulations and physical acts of antigypsyism can occur at the individual, institutional, and/or structural level and includes hate speech and violence within its definition. As a manifestation of such practices, antigypsyism can be extended to include groups and communities who fall within a broader definition, so will likely include Showmen and Boaters in terms of their day-to-day experiences with the state and its agencies regarding, for example, their mobility and interactions with housing, health, and education authorities (Sylvester & Underhill, 2024; Sehmbi & Kamboz, 2023). Much of this is bound up with the legacies, and continued practices, of derogatory stereotypes and racist tropes that present and are experienced as racialised, linguistic, and cultural prejudice and discrimination.

Having discussed and situated GTRSB exclusion and inclusion in the UK and Europe, and the relationship with anti-racist practice and antigypsyism, we now proceed to illustrate such

aspects via lived examples from across the UK. As discussed, this will involve examining experiences in the connected fields of housing, health, and education. We will start with discrimination in public policies and then move on to examining best practices and areas of innovation that might show the best way forward in terms of making GTRSB lives and livelihoods more socially inclusive.

Discrimination in UK Public Policies: housing, health, education

Unfortunately, finding examples where GTRSB communities face everyday discrimination, and exclusion in the fields of housing, health, and education is not hard to do. In different ways, the examples presented here each say something unique, but also something deeply emblematic, regarding the rampant nature and existence of deep-rooted prejudice and ingrained antigypsyism. The examples also speak to some of the profound challenges with integrating antiracist practices across all levels of society, including in the media, local councils, churches, community groups, and in Parliament.

Indeed, to begin with *accommodation and housing*, in March 2023 Gareth Davis MS (Member of the Senedd) suggested that Wales has ‘too many sites’ for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities and argued that the Welsh Government’s statutory duty to provide sites in local authority areas was merely part of a ‘woke agenda’ that interfered with the ‘rights’ of settled non-GRT communities to be able to say ‘We don’t want Gypsies and Travellers near us’ and thus influence the (negative) outcome of planning applications for GRT sites and pitches (Gallagher, 2023). Such prejudicial language being used in the Senedd sends out clear messages that GRT communities do not belong, are not valued, in Wales. At a time when local authority site provision is under serious funding pressures, due to policies of austerity, the consequences of Brexit, and various pressing international events, such statements as those made by Davis can have intended and unintended consequences when

councils come to make important decisions about what provision and services to fund and what to disinvest in. Across other parts of the UK there are similar concerns, for example in Scotland it has been recently proven that local authority sites tend to be placed in very unsafe locations where health hazards such as sewage plants, rubbish dumps, and busy motorway routes are the norm (Quarmby, 2023; Clark, 2024). Similarly, regarding Boaters, recent work has illustrated that water and sanitation insecurity across the network in England and Wales is the norm, not the exception, and this is making lives and livelihoods very precarious for those communities who stay on the water (Sylvester & Underhill, 2024).

In terms of *health care services and practices*, this is also an area that is rife with prejudice and discrimination across the sector in the UK. A recent report produced via the NHS Race and Health Observatory (Unwin et al., 2023) has starkly shown the lack of care and services that are available to GTRSB communities in the UK when it comes to mental health services. The evidence presented via the NHS report demonstrated the disparities in access, take-up, and delivery of services to individuals from the communities, largely due to prejudice and discrimination and showed how, in many situations, such inequalities could quite easily be prevented via a change of approach, attitude and resourcing decisions. Indeed, often, when it comes to prejudicial frontline public policy provision and the poor delivery of health and welfare services, it comes down to misplaced assumptions and racialised stereotypes from some frontline ‘street-level bureaucracy’ staff (Thomas, 1986). This is an area where cultural awareness education and training to combat antigypsyism is required to prevent such instances of discriminatory treatment. One recent example where assumptions and stereotypes caused real harm occurred at Watford General Hospital, which is part of the West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals Trust. This case involved a new mother, Angelina Devlin, whose cervical cancer was not identified early enough by the hospital, even though a midwife had detected a growth in her cervix, because other senior staff assumed she was from the

GTRSB communities and assumed she did not have a fixed address - as a 'Traveller - to be able to follow-up on her care and treatment (Bhandukravi & Pope, 2024). What makes this case interesting, and worthy of note is the fact that Ms Devlin is not from the GTRSB communities herself, but NHS staff had assumed she was and thus offered her a lower level of care and service. This speaks to some of the issues raised above in terms of the work that is still to be done to challenge antigypsyism via engaged anti-racist practices and cultural awareness training.

Regarding the field of *education* there are unfortunately several examples from across the UK that can illustrate the lived experiences of discrimination and inequalities that GTRSB communities endure and the impacts and consequences of antigypsyism in different educational settings. When attendance and performance rates are looked at closely across the UK, in both primary and secondary education settings, the figures are very concerning (Alexander & Shankley, 2020). With low rates of attendance and outcomes at the secondary level, this invariably means that few GTRSB students gain entrance to college and university education. Reflecting on this, O'Neill (2020) discusses the impact of being 'demonised' and stereotyped at school, in a way that impacts on engagement with education more broadly. Indeed, issues such as bullying by fellow pupils and teachers, an inflexible curriculum, and a lack of cultural representation in educational resources can all give rise to a sense of alienation from, and disengagement with, school and education. Due to such matters occurring in state schools, many parents have turned to home schooling as a solution to the effective education of their children. However, this has also been regarded as a 'concern' by state authorities according to the organisation Each Other (Elhassan, 2020). Each Other noted that the Department for Education's own Gypsy, Roma, Traveller stakeholder group has warned that the COVID-19 pandemic saw an increase in numbers of GTRSB parents opting to home school their children and the rates of return to school, in the post-COVID 19

environment, have not caught up. Concerns over decreasing literacy rates and educational gaps meant that the stakeholder group requested further funding to support access to laptops for remote schooling as well as targeted interventions, as part of the national tutoring programme (Traveller Movement, 2020). As with other public and social policy areas, education for GTRSB communities has been seriously disadvantaged due to the COVID-19 pandemic and there is much work to be done to improve the situation and reduce the educational exclusion being faced.

We now proceed to look at some examples of innovation and best practice in housing, health, and education where GTRSB communities, often via their own initiatives, agency, and actions, have sought to improve their situations in these policy areas. As is demonstrated by the contemporary illustrations, this has often involved tackling antigypsyism head-on and demanding that anti-racist practices in the services being accessed, taken-up and delivered is the norm not the exception. As is shown, this has also involved initiating challenging conversations and making not unreasonable requests of public service providers on the grounds of offering culturally appropriate policies and practices and to be included in the conversations about how such services are designed and implemented in the first place. Indeed, active consultation at an early stage of the policy and practice process with GTRSB communities would go a long way to resolving some of the examples previously discussed.

Innovation and Best Practice in UK Public Policies: housing, health, education

Despite the various examples and illustrations of GTRSB discrimination and social exclusion given in the preceding sections, it is also the case that instances of innovation and best practice can be traced and accounted for across the UK. As with the previous section, examples from the policy areas of housing, health, and education will be given, in terms of contemporary experiences of best practice and social inclusion. Behind these examples, it is

argued, lies a commitment to championing antiracism and challenging antigypsyism, often by just one or two committed non-GTRSB individuals working on short-term projects in precarious circumstances.

An example of best practice and service provision in GTRSB *accommodation and housing* can be seen through the work of ELIM housing association (<https://www.elimhousing.co.uk>). ELIM, based in South Gloucestershire, successfully operate, and manage Traveller sites in the South-West of England, specifically North and South Somerset, Bath, Bristol, Gloucestershire, and Devon. As well as employing their own specialist staff on sites, they also work with other local and national organisations, such as Julian House, the NHS, and Citizen’s Advice, to ensure culturally appropriate services are delivered to Gypsy and Traveller site residents. Of significance, ELIM has also worked with and supported the charity SARI (Stand Against Racism and Inequality <https://saricharity.org.uk>) to hold special events for site residents across their network of accommodation, such as picnics and community days to celebrate Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month in Somerset and in Bristol (Travellers Times, 2023). As Lorraine Jenner, a specialist housing manager for ELIM, noted regarding the Somerset event:

“This event brings to life family stories which are sometimes hidden away. As a provider of housing for Gypsies and Travellers, we recognise how important it is to ensure *people feel able to protect and maintain their culture and identity*, and it is a privilege to be able to hear residents share their experiences and lineage with us” (Travellers Times, 2023).

This recognition and appreciation of GTRSB culture and identity by ELIM, and the way this connects to accommodation preferences, is very important and illustrates best practice in terms of how service providers should listen to clients - working as partners - and respond

appropriately. In total ELIM owns or manages more than 90 pitches across five different local authorities in England and this provides accommodation for Irish Travellers, English Romany Gypsies, and New Travellers (e.g., Greenfields Way site in North Somerset). Unsurprisingly, ELIM sits on the National Policy Advisory Panel on Gypsy and Traveller Housing and with others is trying to increase the supply of affordable and appropriate accommodation for the GTRSB communities in England and Wales.

When it comes to *health care services and practices*, there are also some excellent illustrations from across the UK of innovation and best practice in care and service provision, both in terms of physical and mental health needs. Often such practice starts from a place that refuses to identify GTRSB communities as ‘hard to reach’ but rather as communities where traditional and rigidly defined service provision does not tend to work well. In other words, there is a recognition that gaps exist in terms of knowledge, awareness and cultural competencies that impact on working relationships between healthcare staff and GTRSB communities and then, ultimately, this can lead to detrimental effects on health (Greenfields, 2017). Instances of best practice seem to emerge where such ‘gaps’ are openly acknowledged, communications are improved, and services are specifically adapted and tailored to meet the needs of GTRSB community members. For a policy area such as health care, but also housing and education, building trust with the communities is regarded as an essential first step in then being able to have informed and often sensitive dialogue about health conditions, literacies, prognosis, and treatments.

A recent example of this need for trust, specialist provision, and best practice, came during the COVID-19 pandemic. A study by Kühlbrandt et al. (2023) found that many GTRSB participants in their sample initially felt ‘coerced’ into receiving COVID-19 vaccinations and healthcare staff tended to dismiss such concerns with annoyance and hostility, rather than engaging in dialogue about why vaccination was important and necessary. Such dismissals

showed a lack of awareness by healthcare staff regarding, for example, previous interactions many GTRSB individuals and families may have had with healthcare staff and institutions where barriers and discrimination have previously been experienced. In this case, the normally applied ‘vaccine hesitancy’ model (Kafadar et al., 2022) is deemed to be of limited worth and value and, more so, building up trust in health services was where work had to be focused on.

Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) (2024) have produced some excellent guidance on best practice in health care settings and what is interesting to note is that many of these general suggestions for health practitioners are applicable in many different areas of service provision, including accommodation and education. Guidance includes notes on the importance of confidentiality and trust, not assuming literacy or illiteracy, having flexibility around meetings, getting families involved in preventative care, on-site visits and same-gender workers for men/women. Indeed, some of this suggested FFT practice has been evidenced in Leeds via a pioneering community nurse outreach scheme whereby a nurse, Liz Keat, established excellent relationships with local Gypsy and Traveller site residents that saw health and wellbeing improve significantly (Stephenson, 2018). Although this example from Leeds is an illustration of best practice, it does also highlight how often such innovative services tend to rely on the dedication and hard work of just one or two individuals, who also tend to be employed on short-term projects.

As highlighted in the discrimination section, when it comes to examples of innovation and best practice in *inclusive and antiracist education* there are several challenges to be faced, both in terms of institutional and structural inequalities in educational settings, as well as confronting biases and often closed mindsets of staff employed in schools, colleges, and universities (Rogers, 2021). In theory, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (EHRC, 2022) should mean that GTRSB pupils and students have a degree of protection from

‘discrimination, harassment, victimisation’ in education. Not only this but promoting equality of opportunity is an important part of the PSED, and this means that those with protected characteristics, including those from GTRSB backgrounds, should not be internally or informally excluded from education but rather encouraged to fulfil their potentials.

So how can inclusive education and antiracist practices be implemented in education? In short, what works to best ensure GTRSB students are not excluded or left on the outside of mainstream provision? The Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP - <https://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk>) has a wealth of experience in this area and has offered leadership and innovation practice in this area for some time now. STEP has argued, along with charities such as the Advisory Council for the Education of Romanies and other Travellers (ACERT - <https://acert.org.uk>) that an initial task towards inclusive and antiracist practice is to identify the core issues within the institution, whether it is a concern with language and communication, bullying, attendance issues, pre-school experiences, educational transitions, family connections and relations, curriculum design, lesson plan aspects and the like. Further, enhancing awareness of GTRSB history and culture, including contributions within the local area of the school or college, can be helpful in challenging antigypsyism and prejudicial thinking and practices. Indeed, actively challenging anti-GTRSB stereotypes and racist tropes is vital, especially by those in leadership positions at schools. An awareness of who the experts are is also important in this regard, it might be that the school needs to develop and build connections with outside charities and agencies, as much as it needs to draw on internal knowledge and actively involve pupils and students from GTRSB backgrounds into populating reading lists, designing lessons, and curriculum planning (Heeson, 2022).

Indeed, a good example of implementing such inclusive practices at the local level has been evident at the Mount Church of England primary school in Newark, Nottinghamshire where

more than 36% of pupils attending are from the GTRSB communities (Thompson, 2019). This school, through its Head Teacher Claire Kent, has actively engaged with the Traveller Movement's *Good Practice Guide* (Traveller Movement, 2019) for improving outcomes for the community in terms of education. As Mrs Kent explained:

“At our school we prioritise the emotional well-being of our pupils and invest time in meeting the needs of each individual... A child must feel safe, secure, and happy before they can begin to learn, and this is something that was celebrated in our OFSTED inspection last year... We are so proud that our continued commitment to our families and pupils has been recognised and feel hopeful that other schools will be able to learn from our good practice as it is shared across the country”
(Thompson, 2019).

Overall, as the above example demonstrates, it is evident that innovation and good practice in inclusive education for GTRSB pupils and students is possible but, as with the other policy and service areas discussed in this chapter, it requires critical investments in time, staff, resources, expertise, and trust. It takes time and an ability to motivate, challenge, encourage and break down antigypsyism and foster an antiracist climate in schools and colleges.

Conclusion

This brief contextual chapter helps to shine a spotlight on the Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen, and Boater (GTRSB) communities in the UK and has summarised some of the key policy and practice issues that can both encourage social inclusion and challenge social exclusion in the fields of housing, health, and education. The different examples from across the UK used in this chapter help show how discrimination and prejudice, in a variety of public policies and service delivery areas, is substantial, but the chapter has also illustrated

that there is evidence of innovation and best practice when it comes to the operation and implementation of key social and public policies. By looking specifically at the policy worlds of housing, health, and education it is evident that antigypsyism is a potent force of prejudice and discrimination, but active antiracist practice can go some roads to tackling and dismantling such structures, behaviours, and actions. It is important to close this chapter by stating that it could not be exhaustive in its content, but hopefully the examples chosen have been illustrative of wider phenomenon that reflect some of the main concerns of the GTRSB communities themselves, as well as policymakers and other agencies/officials who are charged with trying to construct and operationalise policies that work to reduce individual, institutional, and structural inequalities and discrimination.

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Chapter 3: Higher Education and Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater Communities: An Overview

Chelsea McDonagh

The number of GTRSB students in higher education across the UK has increased over the past decade and there is a growing body of research exploring their experiences (see McDonagh & Fonseca, 2022; Forster & Gallagher, 2020; D'Arcy & Galloway, 2018). According to Brassington (2022), there were 120 Gypsy and Traveller students in higher education in 2012/13, rising to 660 at all levels of higher education in 2020/21. However, counting numbers of GTRSB students is problematic as many may not disclose their identity because of fear of discrimination or racism (Morley et al., 2017; Greenfields & Rogers, 2020; Morgan et al., 2023). Therefore, it can be difficult to judge whether there are more GTRSB students in higher education or whether the increases are due to students disclosing their ethnicity or identity in greater numbers, or a combination of both.

A possible contributor to increases in student numbers, could be the greater focus on widening participation programmes, and initiatives supporting GTRSB students accessing higher education institutions such as the Rom Belong programme at King's College London (KCLWP, 2019) and the GTRSB Pledge spear headed by staff at Buckinghamshire New University. However, although this may be the case, there is still considerable work to be done in widening participation with research highlighting, for example, that many access and participation plans in England do not explicitly focus on GTRSB communities (Atherton, 2020), with these groups often being invisible in university policies (Morgan et al., 2023). In academic literature there has been a greater focus on the experiences of GTRSB students in higher education as opposed to the long-standing focus on primary and secondary education. This means that now more than ever there is a better understanding of the challenges university students, from these communities, are facing.

Barriers to access and sustained participation

Whilst the number of GTRSB students progressing to higher education institutions over the past decade appears to have increased, they are still significantly underrepresented across the higher education landscape. Brassington (2022) shows that as a proportion of the population (based on the Census 2011), there should be approximately 2,600 Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers in higher education at any one time (rather than 660 students). This underrepresentation is especially the case in Russell Group institutions with just 30 disclosing their ethnicity in 2020/21 (Brassington, 2022). Therefore, it is clear that there are barriers preventing GTRSB students from attending university. In relation to Russell Group institutions, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that poor levels of attainment and attendance during compulsory school years would result in less options when it came to choosing a higher education institution (Ford, 2022; McDonagh & Fonseca, 2022).

Moreover, distance from their home and family, caring, familial and work responsibilities might also be factors in the choice of which institutions GTRSB students are choosing to attend (Browne et al., 2022). Gypsy and Traveller young people are, for example, more likely to have a significant caring responsibility, often sitting outside the traditional understanding of caring responsibilities to include younger siblings as well as older relatives and children of their own (MECOPP, 2020). Other barriers to accessing higher education institutions include a lack of representation of these groups within universities (Mulcahy, et al., 2017), with GTRSB rarely being visible, as ‘potential students’ in university spaces (Morgan et al., 2023), a perceived irrelevance and skepticism about post university employment options, fears of not belonging and being ‘out of place’ as well as cultural concerns around student debt; all of this can impact on GTRSB communities considering higher education as an option (Mulcahy et al., 2017).

Given that Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students are among the least likely to progress into higher education of all ethnic groups (Brassington, 2022), their actual experiences of higher education become even more important as it can influence whether other GTRSB students are encouraged, by their families, to apply to universities. Some GTRSB university students may feel pressure to succeed viewing their success as vital in influencing other family members to attend university and to confirm that they made the right decision to attend in the first place (McDonagh & Fonseca, 2022). GTRSB students who have made it to higher education, have done so against all the odds and despite this, they are often entering into institutions where they may feel out of place and at times experience racism and discrimination, both overt and covert (McDonagh & Fonseca, 2022; Morgan et al., 2023).

Moreover, a lack of positive representation of GTRSB communities in the curriculum is evident (Morgan et al., 2023), which can impact on community members experiences of university. Positive representation is important as it has the potential to challenge the negative narrative perpetuated by the media and politicians about GTRSB communities and also supports community and student belonging within university spaces. Moreover, a lack of knowledge about how to navigate higher education institutions can unfairly hinder GTRSB students who will not always have the support of family members for whom these institutions may also be a mystery. This compounds the lack of confidence many GTRSB students feel as they make their way through their degree, at times feeling inadequacy and distress around their academic assignments (Morgan et al., 2023). GTRSB students can also experience a crisis of their identity, feeling that they are no longer Traveller enough for their home communities but also too Traveller for their higher education institutions (McDonagh & Fonseca, 2022; Clark, 2004).

Nonetheless, many GTRSB pupils, who remained in compulsory primary and secondary education, have often developed coping strategies (Derrington, 2007) and those progressing in higher education are no different with some citing hiding their identity to ‘pass’ as non-Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller, whilst others relied on friendship groups and academic achievement to reinforce their sense of belonging (McDonagh & Fonseca, 2022). What is less clear, however, is the experiences and factors that contribute to GTRSB students entering higher education and then dropping out – at present an unheard voice in the academic sphere. With the cost-of-living crisis and the political turmoil that surrounds GTRSB, it becomes even more important that higher education institutions improve the support and resources available to GTRSB students so that they can attend and flourish at university.

Attainment and retention

At present, due to the (assumed) low number of GTRSB students progressing to higher education institutions, the focus has often been on just getting these students in the door. Whilst we have some research and data exploring students' access and experiences in higher education, their attainment and retention rates are much less clear. It is well documented that Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller pupils have the widest attainment gap in early years education (Ford, 2022) and this continues through to secondary education where Gypsy, Roma and Irish Travellers have the lowest attainment rates of any ethnic minority group with just 8.5% of Gypsy/Roma pupils and 14.4% of Irish Traveller pupils achieving grade 5 or above in GCSE Maths and English in comparison to an average of 49.8% (Gov.UK, 2022). Given this, it could be argued that such an attainment and awarding gap also exists at both undergraduate and post graduate levels, but this is not currently a focus on work to reduce university awarding gaps. Furthermore, disadvantaged students are more likely to drop out of their degree programmes (Vignoles & Powdthavee, 2009) and whilst figures for GTRSB

students are unknown, it could be speculated that a similar situation is occurring given that these students are more likely to drop out of compulsory primary and secondary education (Derrington, 2007).

Conclusion

GTRSB students should be applauded for the work they have done in progressing into and through higher education and this should not go unnoticed, neither should the good work of widening participation teams and schoolteachers and other mentors in supporting these students. However, it is important that resources are focused not only on increasing access to higher education institutions when GTRSB pupils are in sixth form and colleges but also in primary and secondary schools to establish a pathway to higher education. Moreover, university outreach into communities through organisations that support GTRSB communities are worthwhile to promote university as a personal possibility and to develop trusting relationships between universities and their local communities. Additionally, whilst getting GTRSB students in the door is an important achievement, it is just as important, if not more, to ensure that they have a positive experience of higher education, feeling that they belong, that they are accepted, that they are protected from discrimination and racism, that they are reflected in the curriculum in a positive light and that they achieve and successfully complete their degrees. Students may need additional support to be made aware of and access the resources that are available throughout their university journey, as for many they will be the first and often only one in their family to have attended university, as well as additional support, including mentoring, during the transition period into higher education. Universities have a responsibility to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), and EDI initiatives across the higher education academy need to examine how far their strategies and practices are inclusive of and reflect the experiences of GTRSB students and communities.

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Chapter 4: Supporting students from Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater communities in higher education: The role of professional services

Margaret Greenfields, Charmaine Holmes, and Wendy Price

Introduction

In this chapter we set out to explore how best professional services and support staff in a range of roles can engage with good practice initiatives which support Romany Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater students (and potential students) into and within Higher Education. As the GTRSB into HE Pledge was being developed throughout 2020 (prior to the formal Pledge launch in January 2021) the team of community members, academics, practitioners and civil society organisations who co-designed the Pledge became acutely aware through our background research and informal conversations with a range of higher education (HE) experienced community members and other stakeholders, that it is critically important to have a joined-up approach to undertaking the social justice work of supporting GTRSB students in their educational journey. In particular, modelling both a ‘whole university’ approach which embeds enhancing cultural competency and knowledge of professional services staff as well as lecturers and other academics, whilst engaging in learning exchange with communities and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) can be fundamentally important in creating a welcoming environment in which learners and their families feel confident in self-identifying and celebrating their ethnicity and heritage in the same way as other minoritised populations.

This holistic approach to supporting GTRSB students to enter, engage and achieve in HE has been highlighted in several reports and publications (Smith et al., 2021; Greenfields et al., 2022; Danvers, 2022; Danvers et al., 2019), and indeed both UK and international reports on students from a range of backgrounds who are ‘first in family/first generation graduates’ flag

the necessity for additional support, sign-posting and mentoring for students who (frequently) do not have access to the cultural or social capital required to successfully negotiate entry into higher education. These students as a result may be at risk of unnecessarily and unjustly experiencing undue anxiety and stress, exacerbated by a complex variant of imposter syndrome in which the experiences of being members of communities who typically experience racism and negative experiences in educational contexts (Morgan et al., 2023; Greenfields & Rogers, 2020) interplay with multiple issues of class and other intersectional characteristics (Hewertson & Tissa, 2022). This in turn can potentially increase the risk of dropping out of HE altogether (Henderson et al, 2022; Fournier, 2022) or suffering reduced wellbeing or harm from their experience in educational establishments (Lewis & Bolton/House of Commons Library, 2023).

As we undertook the background scoping work to co-develop the Pledge a number of GTRSB students and graduates who participated in surveys, focus groups and interviews, as well as those who took part in more informal discussions in a range of settings including workshops and conferences highlighted the impact of supportive non-academic (as well as academic) staff who signposted or supported their journey and how this enabled them to both enter HE and ‘stay the course’ (Traveller woman, graduate). Importantly, around 10% of GTRSB participants we spoke to indicated that support staff could be key to building confidence or providing advice when they felt low or struggled with “elitism and classism” (Showman graduate) with one person suggesting that professional services staff might be perceived of as ‘easier to approach... more accessible’ than lecturers (Traveller male, graduate). This may be especially the case at the early stages of a university career when student confidence may be low, and there might be acute anxiety about ‘seeming stupid because we don’t have the knowledge about where to go or what to do, that someone whose

parents and brothers and sisters have, where everyone in a family always goes to university' (Romani Gypsy student).

Accordingly a number of support and professional services staff involved in diverse roles (including educational support and counselling services), were flagged by GTRSB students and graduates as having been particularly supportive and creating a welcoming environment in various contexts - ranging from initial enquiries about courses, to providing information on student loans or assessments for dyslexia, assisting with first use of academic libraries and not asking 'embarrassing questions' when asked whether materials which represented particular communities existed; answering enquiries about opportunities for single gender halls of residence (which could be of particular concerns for some parents where daughters in particular were leaving home and living away from close family for the first time (Greenfields, 2019; Smith et al., 2021) and generally providing an accessible, engaged and unthreatening 'face' of the Academy.

As part of the background scoping work undertaken by Greenfields and Sherrie Smith (then Research Assistant for the Pledge at Buckinghamshire New University) we undertook a series of focus groups and targeted conversations with both academics and professional services/support staff to understand more about what might assist colleagues working to implement the Pledge. A key finding from discussions with professional and support services (and indeed academic/teaching) staff was that whilst there was a considerable eagerness to learn more about the experiences of GTRSB students and their families, and to provide support which could enhance students' time in university, there was a frequent sense that staff were anxious about causing offence by making inaccurate presumptions, using wrong terminology about communities or their living environments, or simply not knowing how and where they could access accurate information to support students from the communities.

“I would be really reluctant to make suggestions of ways in which I could be more inclusive without knowing more about them... I want the reassurance of speaking with and engaging with the communities a bit more” (Female Senior Registry Administrator).

“I really think having access to someone who is knowledgeable, who has experience and networks would be helpful – to have that kind of presence available, to be on campus so when we are reviewing syllabus or thinking about mitigating circumstances or support for example.. having someone we can have a discussion with [rather than just watching videos]” (Male Senior Administrator involved in quality review of programme validation of programmes and guidance to academic colleagues).

“Knowing perhaps if there are cultural issues or how we can better support and prepare students from these communities when they are on placement – the sort of things we think about with Muslim students and some other cultures” (Female Programme Leader, involved in liaison/developing student placements in health and social care courses).

Accordingly, it is clear from our preliminary findings that (as outlined in Pledge guidance documents) it is critically important that staff in a wide variety of roles in academic settings are provided with familiarisation opportunities and cultural competence training. This will facilitate staff engaging effectively and appropriately with students from the diverse GTRSB communities so as to enable them to support students in a way which ensures they are not at risk of simply responding to stereotypical tropes “learnt from what we see in the media mainly” (female Widening Participation outreach team member) which could create barriers to engagement at best (Atherton, 2022), and cause significant distress and a sense of being

othered or discriminated against at worse (Brassington, 2022). To this end, cultivating good knowledge of the demographics and experiences of local GTRSB communities and building relationships with local support groups and specialist NGOs (Greenfields et al., 2022) can act as a reliable source of advice and information for both academic and support staff who are in ‘first contact’ roles – or who are likely to meet with students from the communities (see resource pages appendix 2 and 3).

It is also important to emphasise that this relates not only to those individuals who are in ‘obvious’ roles such as widening participation teams, but all professional services staff (and lecturers) can benefit from learning about the cultures and support needs of GTRSB students. Moreover, students meet with many individuals employed by universities, including security, learning support, school or faculty administrative colleagues and catering staff to name but a few. As such, including cultural awareness and anti-racism training pertaining to members of the GTRSB communities within induction or mandatory anti-discrimination training sends a strong message to all university employees that the communities are treated with the same respect and recognition of ethnic and cultural differences as are other students from minority groups. This will also ensure that awareness exists of how media-driven stereotypes overwhelmingly bear little resemblance to the realities of the lives of students and their families. The following section is written by a GTRSB colleague who is a co-author of this chapter who reflects upon accessing and experiencing university.

Personal reflections of accessing and experiencing university

My mother was from the Travelling community and my father is a Showmen who historically travelled with the fair to earn a living. When I was born my parents were both settled in a house, and we were a traditional working-class family. My mother would stay at home to raise the children and my father would do various manual jobs to provide for us all. Both of

my parents left education at around fourteen years old to work and education was never a priority for us. My mother married my father when she was sixteen and he was nineteen years old. I did finish school but left without any good GCSE grades as my attendance wasn't always consistent. I was in a relationship from a young age and had my first child when I was nineteen years old. I gave birth to my second child when I was twenty-one and enjoyed being a parent, but felt I wanted to make them proud of me. Two years later I decided to attend college one day a week for interior design as I loved decorating and Travellers always keep their homes lovely. My mother did support me and helped with my children. I think she thought it was a hobby and would give me something to do. I continued until I completed my Higher National Certificate (HNC) in creative arts. I applied for university to study interior architecture as I found it rewarding to study and was very proud of myself. However, my relationship broke down and my eldest child started secondary school which she struggled to settle in. I found myself leaving lectures and not attending so I could be there for my children. Travellers are very family-focused, and their children and family are always their priority. I decided to defer from university so I could be at home with my family. I always worked and would do cleaning because it fitted in with my children. However, after my fourth child began school, I felt I wanted to go back to education and better myself and be a role model for my children. I started work in a preschool and started studying NVQ 2 in early years education in the evening. I passed both my NVQ 2 and 3 in this subject matter. However, I still wanted to progress so applied to university to study social work. I successfully graduated this year (2023) and have secured a job as a social worker.

My family didn't understand my need to go to university and did not agree with my decision to study for a degree full-time. Many Travellers do not always see the importance of education and usually work hard with their hands to provide for their families. It isn't typical for Traveller women to study or work as it is often believed they should be at home looking

after their children and families. It can be seen by some community members that they aren't putting their children first if they study or work and leave their children. Traveller women usually keep a clean home and cook fresh hot meals every night which can be very time consuming especially if working or studying as well. If women work or are in education, it could be seen that they are not fulfilling this role. I think slowly things are changing and more Traveller women are going into further and higher education and can see that they can be both a good wife/mother and be educated.

A lack of funds and a lack of resources can be a barrier to attending educational courses for Travellers with getting into debt often seen as problematic. Education isn't always seen as important, so many from the communities may consider money wasted on a course or materials to complete the course. More engagement with Traveller communities about the benefits of higher education and discussion around culturally appropriate careers as well as the offering of scholarships would be helpful including supporting students from these communities to apply for financial support. Childcare can be another issue as Traveller women don't usually leave their children with strangers, normally only trusting family or someone in an educational setting (such as school) to look after their children. They will not leave their children if they are unwell, so again, within reason it is good for universities to have some flexibility within their provision in recognition of the key caring responsibilities and prioritisation of family by Traveller women. Furthermore, typically, most Travellers have not accessed higher education themselves so do not have this experience and may find it difficult to help their children in their higher education applications or journeys. Having tailored university support in place that supports community members in their applications, therefore, is paramount.

Having heard from a community member about their experiences, which – with cultural and community differences – may well have clear resonance for other Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater students, we turn now to an example of good practice from a co-author with extensive experience of working with professional service colleagues to support students entering higher education.

University of Sunderland and St Teresa’s Catholic Primary School, Darlington

To underpin the positive impact of effectively co-designed and delivered activities and the ways in which simple appropriate steps can change the life-chances and perceptions of potential GTRSB students and their families at an early stage of young people’s educational journey, we present a case study of work undertaken by the University of Sunderland in collaboration with a local primary school: St Teresa’s Catholic Primary School, Darlington.

After signing the GTRSB into HE Pledge in January 2021 as a Pathfinder/First Wave signatory institution, the University of Sunderland designed a collaborative outreach programme with St Teresa’s Catholic Primary School. Almost 25% of pupils at the school are from GTRSB communities, with the vast majority of these GTRSB pupils not continuing in education after Year 6. Additionally, 93.9% of pupils live in areas with low progression to higher education. This collaborative programme aimed to raise awareness of the benefits of higher education and the employment opportunities available, facilitating informed decision making for pupils.

In 2021-22, nine ‘Higher Education Awareness’ workshops were delivered in school. All pupils from Reception to Year 6 participated in these sessions. Year 5 pupils also attended an on-campus event at the University of Sunderland in July 2022. The programme introduced the concept of university as a place of study and provided all pupils with the opportunity to meet current university students. Pupils were encouraged to explore and celebrate their future

aspirations, and the benefits of staying in education post Year 6. All sessions were mapped to the Gatsby Good Careers Benchmarks and the NERUPI Evaluation Framework. Evaluation strategies were designed to measure the short-term impact of the programme. Long-term programme impact was measured via participant tracking.

Following these sessions:

- 85% of pupils agreed that they now know about different subjects they can study at university,
- 71% of pupils now understand the differences between school and university,
- 47% of pupils agree that ‘people like me go to university’,
- 50% of pupils said that they are now considering going to university in future,
- 82% of pupils said that they wanted to achieve their full potential.

Feedback from teachers included:

- Children are now heard talking about going to university and making comments such as “When I am at university...”,
- They know it (university) is accessible to all, that there is so much on offer besides the course they will study,
- Many more children are now aware of, and aspiring to, university in their future.

Pupils were tracked via the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) database. Working with the schools, we aimed to embed these sessions as part of the school curriculum and develop knowledge and understanding of the pupils each academic year. Our longer-term aim is ultimately to inspire behavioural change to support more GTRSB students to enter and succeed in higher education. The higher education progression rates of GTRSB communities are a national challenge and one that we are committed to improving. Tracking participants will enable us to measure the impact of this programme when the pupils reach the age of being university ready. This programme aims to inspire cultural change, facilitating new

beliefs, values, norms, possibilities, and a sense of belonging at university. Pupils learn that university is an achievable outcome for everyone with the capacity and capability to learn, regardless of their background or personal circumstances.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this short chapter, the diverse strands of work presented in this section lead us to propose the following recommendations to maximise the impact of professional services in working with and supporting Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater communities.

- Ensure that colleagues are aware of the names/contact details of local NGOs and community groups working with the different GTRSB communities. Outreach work should be undertaken to ensure that there is ongoing dialogue about education, exploring opportunities for collaborative workshops, opportunities to co-design activities. If you don't have a local group or they don't have capacity (at the moment) to work with a university or college then explore opportunities with national groups – and see how your setting can support (and pay for the time) of local groups in designing mutually effective strategies and learning exchange.
- Training on best practice in working with, and learning from, the very diverse Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater communities. Such training should be delivered by community organisations and individuals with lived experience and tailored to both engage with the experiences and needs of local GTRSB communities as well as aligned to the roles of professional services staff. Taking a tailored and nuanced approach creates a personalised and meaningful educational opportunity which can move beyond the generic and assist university staff in hearing about local people's experiences and concerns, as well as developing shared understanding about

how universities function and can support students, potential students, and their family members.

- Outreach as explored in the case study above (and embedded within the GTRSB into HE Pledge, and extended through the Schools Pledge which supports engagement with schools with a high number of GTRSB pupils) should be carefully designed in collaboration with local stakeholders to support a culturally appropriate and accessible pathway to further and higher education, or other opportunities such as apprenticeships, or simply to support awareness raising of the role and opportunities available to community members who might not otherwise have considered remaining in or re-entering education.
- Signing the GTRSB into HE Pledge /Learning from other Good Practice examples from the GTRSB Network Members. As outlined above the Pledge commits institutions to a series of activities which underpin good practice in working with GTRSB students and their families, as well as supporting staff members in enhancing their understanding and EDI practice. The network consists of a range of community members with lived experience of higher education, local and national civil society organisations and further and higher education providers who have either taken the Pledge or who are interested in doing so. The network is designed to operate as a mechanism for exchange of ideas and good practice. Co-authors of this chapter for example are members of the Network and can sign-post, network, share learning and resources and explore initiatives with other participants in a safe and welcoming environment. Please see link to GTRSB Pledge in appendix 2.

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Chapter 5: Inclusive Curriculum Design, Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy and Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater Communities

Hazel Marsh, Allison Hulmes, and Jane Peacock

‘The Nobodies’, writes the late Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano in a poem of that name, are people ‘who do not appear in the history of the world, but in the police blotter of the local paper.’ They are rendered ‘nobodies’ by systems and institutions that diminish their identities, experiences, and knowledge, representing them as populations:

Who don’t speak languages, but dialects.

Who don’t have religions, but superstitions.

Who don’t create art, but handicrafts.

Who don’t have culture, but folklore (Galeano, 1989, translation by Cedric Belfrage).

As Argentinian theorist Walter Mignolo (2011) argues, the Global North has had the ‘epistemic privilege’ of inventing such classifications of knowledge. These classifications may appear to be universal and natural, but they are constructs that promulgate specific ideas about whose knowledge and culture are deemed ‘superior’, and whose are ‘inferior’. The decolonial turn in academia is, therefore, about more than diversity and inclusivity; it is about recognising how patterns of power and representation, established via colonial practices, continue to influence and shape ‘common-sense’ assumptions about cultural worth and legitimate knowledge today. As such, it is an attempt to challenge and transform such patterns, to ‘restore humanity’ (Maldonado-Torres, 2018).

This chapter explores how lecturers can restore the humanity of GTRSB communities. It examines how staff can support these populations through curricula, and pedagogy, whether

or not they teach or supervise students who identify as GTRSB. After a brief discussion of decolonising the curriculum and the importance of including GTRSB students in these actions, the chapter offers reflections on anti-oppressive practice and inclusive curriculum design and pedagogy related to GTRSB communities. We conclude by arguing that HE provides opportunities for lecturers to disrupt negative stereotypes about GTRSB groups, to question the production of knowledge about the ‘other’, and in doing so, to equip all students to become critical thinkers and more inclusive citizens.

Decolonising the curriculum

In recent years, student-led campaigns in the UK such as ‘Why is My Curriculum White?’ and ‘#LiberateMyDegree’ have highlighted Eurocentrism and lack of diversity of curricula across UK universities (Bhambra et al., 2018: 1). These campaigns do not argue that curricula that predominately feature scholarship by and about white men are ‘politically incorrect’, but instead that they are ‘intellectually unsound. Monocultures do not produce good thinking’ (Gopal, 2021: 877). Decolonisation initiatives thus benefit not only students of colour and minoritised students; they stem from a recognition that education plays a ‘key role in the formation of self in relation to others’, place value on social responsibility, and equips all students to become more competent global citizens (Pérez Miles, 2019: 15).

Universities today acknowledge the importance of inclusive curriculum frameworks.

According to Kingston University, this means thinking about the curriculum in ways that challenge and change basic assumptions, based on three fundamental principles:

1. Create an accessible curriculum,
2. Enable students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum,
3. Equip students with the skills to positively contribute to and work in a global and diverse world.

We would argue that curricula also need to enable students from diverse backgrounds to see themselves reflected in positive ways, and not only as a ‘social problem’ (Morgan et al., 2023). Moreover, since a global and diverse world includes GTRSB communities, it follows that non-Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students need opportunities to develop deeper understandings of GTRSB peoples and the ways in which they are (mis)represented in common discourses. Lecturers should be prepared to create spaces within which to challenge the ‘epistemic privilege’ that enables the repetition and perpetuation of stereotypes that stigmatise or exoticise GTRSB communities and contribute to inequality.

This is not to suggest that lecturers must become experts in Romani Studies, or that GTRSB groups should necessarily be included in the curriculum as a topic of study. Indeed, teaching that homogenises GTRSB groups and experiences, and constructs them as ‘others’ or as ‘victims’, risks stereotyping and essentialism (Kalsås & Helakorpi, 2020). Rather, the production of knowledge about GTRSB communities can be questioned, analysed, and contextualised when issues relating to GTRSB peoples emerge in the classroom. Rowe and Goodman (2014) have shown how certain discursive strategies are used in online discussions to present anti-Gypsy patterns of thought as non-racist, non-discriminatory, and rational observations. These are: referring to Gypsies as abnormal ‘others’; constructing criminality as a key characteristic of all Gypsies; suggesting that some Gypsies are ‘bogus’ and using this to argue against all Gypsies; and presenting Gypsies as outside the law and seeking special favours (Rowe & Goodman, 2014: 30). Such strategies allow for the articulation of hate and prejudice, delegitimising and dehumanising GTRSB communities and denying any similarities between them and non-Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities (Rowe & Goodman, 2014). Similar discourses are regularly manufactured and perpetuated via the mass media and popular culture (Richardson & O’Neill, 2012; Tarr, 2004; Tremlett, 2013). When

they are repeated in the classroom, such discursive strategies can be examined, unpicked, and challenged.

Inclusive curricula need to recognise and value GTRSB communities, without essentialising, homogenising or ‘othering’. Where possible, positive examples can be included in curricula by incorporating GTRSB authors and scholars, and lecturers can ensure that key texts are ordered for their institutions’ libraries. For example, in teacher training courses, story books by GTRSB authors such as Richard O’Neill and Rosaleen McDonagh offer illustrations and stories that represent the diversity of GTRSB lives in non-stereotypical ways. The award-winning digital resource RomArchive, with contributions from diverse Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller authors, artists, writers, and scholars, contains resources on a wide range of topics including politics, art, music, literature, and film. The European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) similarly contains Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller authored resources on arts and culture, history and politics, and the production of knowledge (please see resources section for further examples).

But an inclusive curriculum is about more than adding GTRSB authors. Lecturers must also recognise that GTRSB students in Higher Education may fail to reach their full potential because of ‘imposed assumptions around what [GTRSB] people and communities are like, and their externally perceived limitations’ (Danvers & Hinton-Smith, 2022: 5). In other words, GTRSB students are sensitive to the ways in which others perceive their communities, and therefore may experience universities as unsafe spaces where they are not free to disclose their academic and pastoral needs. The ‘burden of adjustment’ to university life is therefore placed on community members themselves, rather than on the universities (Forster & Gallagher, 2020: 23). Moreover, all too aware of the ‘stigma of trouble’ (Joyce, 2013) attached to their identity, in university spaces Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students may be

hyper-vigilant about sharing their ethnic identity (Morgan et al., 2023). When GTRSB students do disclose their ethnicity or identity, they may find that they are expected to carry out the emotional labour of teaching others about it; ‘I spent a lot of time educating instead of being educated’, as one student put it (cited in Forster & Gallagher, 2020: 20). Lecturers need to avoid such ‘epistemic exploitation’, which occurs when marginalised people are compelled to educate others ‘about the nature of their oppression’ (Berenstain, 2016: 569).

An anti-oppressive framework

In their inclusive curriculum health check, UCL (n.d) provide a framework to support lecturers in ensuring all students, including those in protected characteristic groups, can participate fully and achieve their maximum potential. Adhering to such a framework could enhance teaching and learning in HE for all student groups. With regard to curriculum content, the UCL health check recommends lecturers reflect on the extent to which a curriculum creates ‘opportunities to discuss different perspectives within and outside the UK related to ethnic diversity’ and allows students ‘to gain an understanding of how different factors e.g. social, economic, ethnicity influence outcomes and perspectives’. An anti-oppressive framework equips students to recognise the impact of past and present contexts in shaping how social groups are understood and represented, and encourages critical self-reflection (Aqil et al., 2021: 344). In the next section, (Peacock & Hulmes) reflect on their own experiences in HE, and on anti-racist and anti-oppressive teaching practices. They show how critical self-reflection can be transformative for both lecturers and students.

Reflections from teaching: critically engaging with dominant representations

As a white Gorgier (non-Gypsy) woman, I (Jane) consider myself a collaborator and ally in working with people with lived experience of being part of the GTRSB communities. As a community social worker and latterly a senior lecturer in social work, I have had

opportunities to work with a variety of GTRSB communities. As part of my critical approach to teaching, I promote discussions with student groups around privilege by unpicking the systems and everyday practices that reinforce and normalise the contemporary dimensions of white dominance (Kendi, 2023). An understanding of white privilege is of importance in relation to understandings of GTRSB groups as they are often positioned as ‘outsiders’ to hegemonic whiteness; they and their perceived way of life are not ‘white enough [nor] an acceptable shade of whiteness’ (Bhopal 2011: 327; Bhopal & Myers 2008; Bhopal 2018).

One’s positionality is not only formed by lived personal experiences but is shaped by the social constructs that make up those experiences (Dahl, 2015; Herr & Anderson; 2005). A few years ago, I was invited to facilitate a workshop on working with Gypsy and Traveller families to a group of soon-to-be-qualified teachers. Of the group of 22 students, 17 were due to start as newly qualified teachers in schools where I knew that there were numbers of GTRSB pupils. However, what was evident was that their teacher training curriculum had lacked a critical understanding of the ways in which society constructs and positions GTRSB communities. This is a serious problem because, in the absence of an understanding of the underlying factors that produce and reproduce dominant representations of ‘minoritised’ groups, teachers may base their treatment of Romani and Traveller pupils and their families on inaccurate stereotypes absorbed through the mainstream media and societal discourses which can impact on life chances and educational outcomes. Moreover, a lack of critical reflection can also mean that where Gypsies and Travellers do appear in the curriculum, their representation may be highly problematic. As one student, quoted in Morgan et al. (2023: 497) observes:

Suddenly this video on Dale Farm⁷ is shown and I knew what would happen, lots of comments that were negative, also racist and that is what happened... a discussion around criminality, not paying taxes... and I was sat there having to listen to it. The lecturer didn't do anything or address the negative comments, and I was not sure what the purpose was of showing the video.

Analysing and countering such deficit representations is part of critical teaching. This should also include the inclusion of strength-based representations of GTRSB communities in the curriculum which value and recognise the authority, expertise and knowledge of community voices, histories, and experiences. Moreover, an understanding of the structural and societal factors which impact on the everyday lives of GTRSB communities is key and the lecturer who showed the Dale Farm video, for example, could have used this as an opportunity to critique policy and the representation of communities. In my own work, I often use photographs of Gypsy and Roma communities to elicit student's impressions and reasons for these impressions, this enables me to support student's analysis of stereotypes and power relations to deepen understanding. For example, I will highlight current legislation and talk about how travelling now has been criminalised (unless you are a white middle class camper van driver). This often leads to discussions around discrimination and social justice, supporting critical learning for students.

It is also important to challenge deficit thinking and racism within universities, and GTRSB groups need to be included in this. I had an occasion recently in two lectures where discriminatory comments were made by a lecturer in front of me - 'the reason we don't like them is that they.....'. It is appalling that an academic could demonstrate such a lack of understanding, and universities should be spaces where staff and students can feel safe to

⁷ Court order that led to the eviction of Travellers from Dale Farm.

engage in ‘uncomfortable’ discussions. The stereotypical comments gave me the opportunity to respond, leading to a discussion in which I challenged this negativity. It is important that we actively address racism that occurs as many people feel they can openly share their negative views about Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers which they would not do publicly about other racially minoritised groups. As lecturers we are in an influential position, and we have a responsibility to be leaders in critical thinking, critical learning, anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice.

Reflections from social work: challenging the negative framing of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller families

As a Welsh Romani social work student, I (Allison) did not share my ethnicity with lecturers, and only with a small number of my fellow students. I studied social work 24 years ago in the university where I also spent many years as a guest lecturer, and where I am now a senior lecturer in social work, and I did not feel safe to share my identity. The only time that I remember hearing about Romani and Traveller people was in a pejorative way, and the framing of families was always as them being problematic, but not the systems and structures in which they lived. Students on my qualifying course were never taught about the long history of racism and disadvantage, about inequality gaps across key areas such as accommodation, education, and health or how this may impact a family system, or anything about our rich culture. During my social work course, I was also exposed to casual racism and the not-so-casual use of stereotypes, which I believe was more overt twenty plus years ago. There was no place for psychological safety as an ethnic Welsh Romani student and the fact that I was a master’s student in social work – almost unheard of at the time for an ethnic Romani - motivated to be on the course because of social work international commitment to social justice and human rights, somehow increased my sense of alienation and distress, as naively I expected and hoped for better.

I have always been dedicated to social work education and made a commitment to myself that I would be part of improving the experience of future generations of Romani and Traveller social work students. One of the ways I have sought to do this is by being visible in my identity as a Romani social worker. This has not been without its challenges and personal costs, and one way of counteracting this was by setting up the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Social Work Association which was formed by social workers who are ethnic Romani and Travellers. It was important to us to create a safe, peer-led space for Romani and Traveller social workers and students to share experiences, gain support and find psychological safety in what has become, since the implementation of the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act of 2022, an increasingly hostile environment for us. Another key motivation in setting up the association has also been to act as a role model for Romani and Traveller people to enter the profession. It is fundamentally important to see yourself represented in all professions, including social work, which can be viewed negatively as a career choice for Romani and Traveller people because of its long history of harmful practice when intervening in our private and family life.

Having set up the Romani and Traveller Social Work Group, I gained wider experience of developing, delivering, and evaluating training and we have delivered teaching on social work programmes across the UK. The uniqueness of the teaching that was developed and delivered by the Romani and Traveller Social Work Group, is that it is the first time that this has been done by social workers who were also ethnic Romani and Traveller. We bring our applied research knowledge as registered social workers, along with our lived experience. When I deliver teaching on anti-Romani and Traveller racism, I always declare my ethnicity. This is for several reasons, not least that there may be Romani and Traveller students present who have not felt safe to self-identify but who may choose to speak with me in private. I can offer them support or signpost them to support. I also talk about some of my personal and

family experiences, and it may be the first time that most of the students will have heard about the impact of racism and discrimination directly from an ethnic Romani Gypsy, and they need to hear it.

I remind students of their responsibilities as regulated professionals in maintaining standards around upholding rights, dignity, and the value of all people. As part of this, I reference the Equalities Act 2010 to reinforce that it is the law in England, Wales and Scotland to comply with duties relating to the protected characteristics, which includes Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers as legally protected ethnicities. This usually raises some eyebrows, as it may be the first-time students have been made aware of this. It is also important to refer to the protected characteristics to ensure the students begin to think more critically, using an intersectionality lens.

Once I have framed the teaching around our professional ethics, values, and regulatory standards, I often will begin with a short exercise exploring what the students think are some of the biggest challenges facing Romani and Traveller people. I also show a short, accurate film on the origins and differences between Romani and Traveller people, as most in the room will not have any knowledge of the distinct ethnic groups under the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller umbrella term, or their history.

I then focus in on the history and longevity of state sanctioned mechanisms to define, name and control Romani and Traveller people, stretching as far back as the Egyptian Act of 1530 and up to the present day with the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act of 2022. It is vital that students know this history to understand the strength of communities who have survived and sought to thrive in persistently hostile contexts, and to know that state sanctioned persecution has been in existence since Romani people first arrived on these

shores. It is also important that social work students reflect on inter-generational trauma which sits in many families, and how this can manifest in mistrust of authority and the state.

In my teaching, I refer to available research evidence, and evidence the gross inequality gaps in education, health, accommodation, employment, and ethnic disparities in referral into child welfare services. I also use case-studies when teaching social work students, which help students apply their knowledge, skills, ethics, and values to realistic scenarios in a safe space. I use exercises to tease out students' attitudes towards Romani and Traveller families when they have received a referral. How social workers think, and feel can impact on how they act when assessing families, and it is important to think about the over-representation of Romani and Traveller children referred to child welfare services in England. If social work students harbour negative feelings through unconscious bias, this risks them practising in a way which falls below the ethics, values, and the regulatory standards of our profession. I introduce at this stage Gaertner and Davidio (1986) and their work on aversive racism, and how negative feelings and beliefs arise from mostly unavoidable cognitive, motivational, and socio-cultural processes and why we must, as ethical practitioners, actively challenge ourselves and our beliefs.

It is important to talk about solutions, and these centre on diversification of leadership in social work, true co-production with families, using rights-based and strengths-based approaches, being pro-Romani and Traveller, acknowledging complexity and risk as being multi-issue, and the importance of engaging with Romani and Traveller Social Workers as leaders in social work with Romani and Traveller families.

There are so many brilliant educational resources on GTRSB history and culture, along with empirical research, so if this is firmly linked to social work ethics, values and practice, and lecturers are honest about their own knowledge or experience, they cannot go wrong. Cultural

competence is important, but too often I have seen teaching which is all cultural competence and is not in any way connected to professional social work.

Our recommendations are:

Connect the long history of state control mechanisms to the present day and explore with students the rationale for this and the impact on the families they will be supporting.

Consciously unpack unconscious bias and the concept of aversive racism and how this may influence social work practice and decision making.

- Contact an organisation that supports Romani and Traveller people and invite them to support your teaching, especially where they co-create and deliver the training with community members. Also make sure you have a budget to pay for people's valuable time and effort.
- Challenge negative stereotypes from students or staff. This is where teaching and understanding aversive racism is important. Social work students must develop their skills in critical reflection, and these are learning moments, unless it is quite clearly racism in which case institutional procedures would then need to be followed through.
- My best advice would be to connect with the Romani and Traveller Social Work Association so we can lend our support in relation to best practice and quality assuring of any teaching on anti-Romani and Traveller racism.
- Inform yourself of current changes in policy and legislation and positive or negative stories from the media to prepare for any uncomfortable discussions which may arise.

Conclusion

GTRSB communities are not often thought about in relation to inclusive curricula, anti-oppressive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum, and this urgently needs to change.

Given the discomfort many GTRSB students may feel about revealing their ethnicity or identity, lecturers cannot assume that they do not have any GTRSB students in their lectures and seminars and overlook the issues that affect them. Even if a lecturer is certain that they are not teaching any GTRSB students, it is still incumbent upon them to reflect GTRSB heritage and history in a positive way, and to unpack and analyse the negative assumptions about GTRSB culture that are perpetuated in sensationalist media reports, and ‘reality’ shows, as well as in policy, and legislation and across society generally.

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Chapter 6: Raising the visibility of Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater students in Higher Education Strategy, Policy, and Equality Initiatives

Julia Morgan and Esther Stubbs

The increasing focus on marketisation and commodification of higher education (HE) over the past decades is said to have ‘resulted in decreasing investment in HE and less inclination to fund access initiatives’ (Thompson, 2019: 191). Although there will be differences across the four devolved nations of the United Kingdom, this can result in competition between different groups for finite resources, with access and equality initiatives being increasingly underpinned by economic factors rather than a focus on dismantling structural inequalities (Bhopal, 2022; Bhopal & Pitkin; Ahmed, 2012; Noon, 2007). This may result in a ‘tension between the business case and social justice approaches’ (Tomlinson, & Schwabenland, 2010: 101).

Access and participation plans and GTRSB communities

To charge the maximum tuition fees, higher education institutions in England need to outline in access and participation plans how they ‘will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education’ (Office for Students, 2023a). Despite GTRSB students being identified by the Office for Students (2019, 2020, 2021, 2023b) as under-represented groups who have a risk of decreased ‘equality of opportunity’ in relation to higher education, research has indicated that GTRSB communities are absent from many access and participation plans (Atherton, 2020; Forster et al., 2022; Morgan et al, 2023). Atherton (2020) in his analysis found that out of 100 plans that were submitted in 2019 for the period 2021-2025, less than 30 included any reference to Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students. Moreover, less than 5% of plans detailed any specific

activities to increase higher education participation and access amongst Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities with none of the plans containing any targets for recruitment.

Atherton (2020) recommends that the annual updates from higher education institutions to the Office for Students should include how universities are strategically planning to engage with increasing access and participation for these communities.

Forster et al., (2022) building on Atherton's work found in their analysis of 245 plans (which were available online) for the periods 2020-21 to 2024-25 that only 35% of plans referred to Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen, and Boaters. Moreover, only 7% of plans highlighted the ethnic minority status of minoritised ethnic Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers and 20% do not capitalise their ethnicity (for example, Gypsy). In relation to specific activities which aimed to increase access and participation for these groups, only 20% of plans included supportive activities with many of these action points 'limited to fairly generic intentions to explore opportunities and good practice for working with GTRSB' (Forster et al., 2022: 16). Some plans mentioned that they had consulted with GTRSB students and those with specialist knowledge and a few mentioned that they were going to undertake focus groups or community outreach or had been informed by the literature on the topic (Forster, personal communication).

Three discourses were apparent across the access and participation plans when discussing GTRSB communities (Forster et al., 2022). First, not having enough data on these communities to aid strategic decision making. However, as Forster et al., (2022) highlight there is growing evidence from reports and research on the under-representation of GTRSB communities in higher education which can be used to inform strategy, with this body of research in many ways being more helpful than the official data that is currently collected. Second, a discourse of GTRSB numbers in higher education being small or a minority in the

local area was also noted which resulted in these communities not being seen as one of the university priority groups. However, this type of discourse can contribute to the continual under-representation of GTRSB community members in higher education as their assumed small numbers, in relation to business case, become a proxy for a lack of strategy and action in terms of equality and social justice. Third, a reactive rather than proactive discourse about support only being offered when it was requested by GTRSB students was also apparent. This is problematic as it puts the onus on GTRSB students to actively seek the support which is offered to other under-represented groups. If they don't ask for support, then the inference is that there is no identifiable need, which in turn feeds into the narrative that there are low numbers of GTRSB students in higher education if they are not coming forward for support. What is also evident in this type of discourse is an under-appreciation of the possible emotional labour that needs to be expended in having to self-identify and explain why as a GTRSB student you may need support; especially with no guarantee of understanding or support being offered. In some scenarios self-identifying may also lead to the opposite of support and understanding, exposing community members to discrimination and racism. However, when an offer of support is proactive and GTRSB students are explicitly included as priority groups in initiatives this may facilitate students coming forward to take up support, as proactive support by universities indicates some understanding and appreciation of the communities. Moreover, as Forster et al. (2022) states this discourse is mainly focused on community members who are already students and may be of limited use in widening participation initiatives.

Specific activities which could be incorporated in access and participation plans as well as other access initiatives across the devolved nations of the UK may include a focus on positive action such as mentoring, pre and post application support, guaranteed accommodation, access to university and widening participation programmes including outreach, network

opportunities, inclusion in A' level or Highers tuition initiatives, contextual offers⁸, a designated point of contact, and scholarships including fee discounts⁹ and maintenance bursaries. Moreover, specific activities which support higher education institutions working in partnership with families and communities to facilitate the building of trusting relationships are needed. This is important as families and communities may not only have influences on an individual's higher education decisions but may also have awareness of possible modifications to access initiatives that are required. In addition, access initiatives which work with families and communities need to accommodate literacy levels and English language skills, the latter especially may be the case for some Roma families and communities. This could be supplemented with case studies of students from the communities who have graduated which may be of some use in promoting access and participation. The University of Hull is one of only a few universities who specify a contextual offer for GTRSB communities, whilst universities such as St Georges, University of London offer pre and post application support and the University of South Wales includes GTRSB students in their Ethnicity Equality Bursaries.

Positive action also includes celebration and inclusion of GTRSB communities in university spaces and in the curricula which, if done well, may counter negative deficit societal representations and go some way to ensuring that these groups are not constructed as 'out of place' or 'space invaders' in university spaces (Puwar, 2004: 8). Research by Morgan et al. (2023), for example, found, from an analysis of 50 UK university websites during Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller history month in June 2021, that only 3 universities specifically mentioned this celebration. Not having a specific focus on GTRSB students in university

⁸ A focus on contextual offer priority groups, for example the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, free school meals, Polar4 Quintile 1 and 2, may not necessarily be applicable to all GTRSB individuals and families and hence the need for an explicit focus on GTRSB in contextual offers and other widening access initiatives.

⁹ Where tuition fees are applicable.

spaces can result in invisibility and a sense of not belonging as described by one Roma student who said: ‘Roma are not visible at university, there is nothing to do with Roma. To the university, Roma don’t exist’ (cited in Morgan et al., 2023).

Case study: Anglia Ruskin University - GTRSB into Higher Education Pledge

Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) proudly demonstrate their commitment to providing the best educational support that fosters inclusivity and diversity for all their students, both at home and internationally. The GTRSB access to Higher Education Pledge team led by Dr David Smith, a Reader in Social Policy, goes one step beyond that responsibility to ensure protected characteristics of race, as enshrined in the Equalities Act (2010) are upheld. At ARU the GTRSB Pledge team work to fully implement Vice Chancellor Roderick Watkins actions when he signed up to the commitments of the Pledge in April 2022. Signatory to the Pledge is a public declaration of the commitment to support, understand and reduce some of the challenges and barriers GTRSB students and staff experience when attempting to access, pursue and thrive at ARU promoting benefits for students, staff, and other educational institutions by way of cultural exchange.

The GTRSB HE Pledge not only acknowledges that barriers and challenges exist for GTRSB communities it also seeks to widen participation and inclusion for these students in higher education. In the UK education system ethnic Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers (GRT) students are ranked as the lowest achieving ethnic group, and the least likely to access higher education¹⁰ with just 6.9% of Gypsy/Roma, and 10.7% of Irish Travellers in higher education in 2019/2020 (Brassington, 2022). What these figures tell us as well as earlier research commissioned by Kings College London’s Widening Participation department (2017) is that

¹⁰ By the age of 19 years old.

the low uptake of ethnic GRT students progressing to higher education continues to remain lower over time compared to non GRT students (Department of Education, 2023).

The Pledge, meaning promise, has been developed in consultation with GTRSB community members, consisting of students, academics, and education policy specialists and aims to effectively widen participation and inclusion whilst also developing interventions that are culturally relevant when working with GTRSB communities. Our aims are to actively promote community involvement and partnership working when developing best practice methods for creating safe and inclusive environments. We hope that this approach will begin to build confidence and trust with students, parents, carers, their families, and their wider communities should they decide that planning and accessing higher education is for them.

The GTRSB Pledge team at ARU are involved in a wide variety of activities to support efficacy of our work and commitments. Some of the work we undertake, besides research and reviewing best practice methods for supporting students and staff, is to promote cultural awareness. We do this by working with library staff and the student union; we maintain an active steering group that proudly works in partnership with students and graduates to incorporate their feedback and ideas. We organise and run events to celebrate GTRSB culture and identity particularly during GRT history month, world funfair month and Roma holocaust day. A public photography exhibition has been held to promote a sense of belonging for GTRSB students and celebrate a university wide ethos of acceptance and diversity. Other activities include assisting future students with university applications, collaborating with film making and cultural awareness across ARU's campuses. We have given bursaries to GTRSB students to support them with their studies, collaborated with ARU students to create and raise awareness about microaggressions. The Pledge team has

employed a former ARU graduate from the GTRSB community to support Dr David Smith as he leads the GTRSB Pledge into meaningful success.

Employing community members aligns with our goals to work in partnership and consider different perspectives about the individual experiences and challenges of those that make up the collective term GTRSB that represents a diverse group. By listening and learning sensitively to the lived experiences and perspectives of GTRSB communities we can truly celebrate creating best practice that reflects rich cultures and heritage, particularly during GRT history month. For example, this year Roma students from local secondary schools in Peterborough enjoyed a celebrating cultural enrichment at the newest ARU campus in Peterborough, joined by inspirational speakers from the Roma community. For further information on specific activities to support GTRSB students please see the aide memoire in the appendix.

Race Equality Charter

Advance HE's Race Equality Charter states that:

The UK higher education sector will not reach its full potential unless it can benefit from the talents of the whole population and until individuals from all ethnic backgrounds can benefit equally from the opportunities it affords (Advance HE, 2023a).

Currently, there are 101 Race Equality Charter members, 41 of whom have awards (mostly Bronze and one Silver award) (Advance HE, 2023b). Exploring the available online¹¹ Race Equality Charter applications and action plans from those members who were successful, there was no mention of minoritised ethnic Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students and staff.

¹¹ Some application forms and action plans were not published online. Fifteen (15) plans were examined.

This was partly a result of the data collection which compares a single BAME category (defined as Black, Asian, Chinese, Dual/Mixed heritage, or Other “non-white”) with a single white category; with the latter including those who identified as having Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller ethnicity. This was the case even when the data was later partially disaggregated by ethnic group with minoritised ethnic Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students and staff not being explicitly named as specific and separate ethnic groups and instead being included, again, in the general white ethnicity category.

However, many Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students are minoritised ethnic groups under the Equality Act (2010)¹² protected characteristic of race which includes colour, ethnic or national origin, or nationality. This was reiterated by the High Court (Moore v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, 2012) who ruled that ‘by virtue of section 9(4) of Equality Act 2010, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, each a distinct racial group, form a racial group for the purposes of section 9 of the Act’¹³. The inclusion of minoritised ethnic Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students/staff in the white category for analysis and publication purposes, in relation to HESA^{14,15} and Race Equality Charter data, thus can render invisible their lived experiences of being a ‘protected’ ethnic group who face substantial discrimination and racism, conflating these experiences with the white majority.

Whilst many ethnic Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers may identify and be identified as phenotypically white, they are also racialised and subject to ‘racecraft’ (Fields & Fields, 2012; Matache et al., 2020) which positions them as ‘not white enough’ (Bhopal, 2018; Fox

¹² In England, Wales, and Scotland.

¹³ The courts have also confirmed the same to be the case for Scottish Travellers. The court case MacLennan v Gypsy Traveller Education and Information Project, (2008), led to the recognition of Scottish Gypsies and Travellers as a minority ethnic group.

¹⁴ Higher Education Statistics Agency.

¹⁵ Roma was not included in the valid entry label for HESA data and the expectation was that they would code as either 'Gypsy or Traveller' or 'Other White background'. From 2022/2023 Roma are to be added to 'Gypsy/Roma/Traveller' category as reported by personal communication.

et al., 2012) ‘culturally and socially’ problematic and a ‘threat’ to hegemonic whiteness and social order¹⁶. Matache et al., (2020), talking about European Roma, highlights how in European countries ‘gadjo-ness [being a non-Roma] like whiteness has been privileged and institutionalised’ (p76) and is an ‘Euro-specific form of whiteness....built in opposition to Roma’ (Matache, 2016). This is also evident in the United Kingdom where antigypsyism¹⁷ as a core component of established and institutionalised whiteness imposes, upon these diverse communities, racialised and stigmatising group stereotypes of alterity including controlling images of innate and immutable inferiority, ‘cultural backwardness’, and criminality which mark them out as ‘outsiders’ to the white non-gadjo majority. Antigypsyism, thus, results in racist systems of inequality, domination, and oppression which can constrain opportunities and lead to ‘civilising projects’ which aim to control, assimilate, acculturate and/or segregate.

Whilst the Race Equality Charter, therefore, is underpinned by a focus on reducing ‘racial inequalities’, and highlights that ‘the work to drive out racism in all its forms from our sector is imperative and incumbent on all of us, especially those in leadership positions’, the inclusion of minoritised ethnic Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities in aggregated white ethnicity data categories, can lead to ‘institutional university silence on the racism directed at [these] students’ (Morgan et al., 2023:498) resulting in anti-racist policies and

¹⁶ ‘Cultural racism’ or ‘co-ethnic’ racism explores racism beyond ‘colour coded’ (Cole, 2023) ‘white/BAME’ binary categorisations and shows how groups can become racialised through accent, religion, nationality, cultural identity, migration (see: Ang et al., 2022; Rzepnikowska, 2019, Hickman & Ryan, 2020; Hickman & Walter, 1995; Paraschivescu, 2020 for some examples). Moreover, Garner (2007; 2017:204) shows how there are “contingent hierarchies” in which ‘white Europeans position other ostensibly white Europeans in subaltern places according to culture, religion and/or nationality’.

¹⁷ Antigypsyism has been defined as a ‘specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, and a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed through, among other things, violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation, and the most blatant kind of discrimination’ (ECRI, 2011); ‘It includes the homogenising and essentialising perception and description of these groups, the attribution of specific characteristics to them, and discriminatory social structures and violent practices that emerge against this background, and which have a degrading and ostracising effect, and reproduce structural disadvantages’ (Alliance against Antigypsyism, 2017).

initiatives being nonresponsive to community experiences of racism, Romaphobia and antigypsyism. Moreover, the inclusion of these communities in aggregated white ethnicity data can result in a lack of attention to the experiences and outcomes (for example, continuation rates and awarding gaps) of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students, who as a result are rendered invisible in university strategic thinking, and equality, diversity and inclusion policy and practice.

Forster et al. (2022) highlight the importance of university data collection reflecting the diversity of groups who identify as GTRSB to ensure that the needs of these diverse groups are met. For example, James (2021:152) shows the pitfalls of aggregating diverse communities as ‘one community of difference’ and discusses how the needs of migrant Roma may be different to the needs of ‘indigenous Gypsies and Travellers’ and these in turn may be different to the needs of Irish Travellers, of Showmen, of Bargee Travellers, and of New Travellers¹⁸. Collection of data on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller ethnicity and disaggregation of this data, therefore, is key to increasing our understandings and informing equality initiatives. However, the assumed official low numbers of GTRSB students in universities, which often may not reflect the reality of how many community members attend university, as well as the diversity of groups under the term ‘GRT’ or ‘GTRSB’ is often seen as problematic in data analysis. Thus, it is important to supplement quantitative data with qualitative data (Forster et al., 2022) to enable thick descriptions of lived experiences as well as enable the production of counter-narratives that challenge deficit discourses.

Also apparent in the analysis of the Race Equality Charter applications was that out of all the examples of good practice that were highlighted, there were none which included examples of good practice which related to ethnic Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller students. This

¹⁸ There may, however, be some common experiences especially around social exclusion, insecure accommodation, racism, and discrimination.

was also the case in relation to action plans where almost all the plans did not feature any specific actions in relation to these groups. This is probably indicative of a lack of culturally informed knowledge and attention to ethnic Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students in race equality initiatives across the higher education academy. Kings College, University of London, one of a few who did specifically mention Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students in their action plan stated, ‘We will lead the sector in driving the inclusion of the Latinx and GRT communities – often neglected in anti-racism’. Reflections upon why minoritised ethnic Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students (and staff) are not included in Race Equality Charter applications and action plans is thus needed to ensure that higher education institutions in Scotland, Wales, and England¹⁹ fulfil their obligations under the Equality Act (2010) which states that public authorities have a statutory duty in:

‘Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low’ (Equality and Human Rights Commission, nd)

Conclusion

As we have seen in this handbook, GTRSB communities have a disproportionately low participation rate in higher education (Brassington, 2022; ONS, 2023); they also have, in

¹⁹ For Northern Ireland, duties under the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. This Order has been critiqued as offering less protection than the Equality Act (2010) (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2014).

England, low rates of 1st/2:1 undergraduate awards and low undergraduate continuation rates (Office for Students, 2023c). The accumulating evidence, therefore, supports the need for the inclusion of GTRSB communities in widening participation and EDI initiatives as well as the inclusion of minoritised ethnic Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students in Race Equality initiatives including Charter applications. It is important that data monitoring reflects the diversity of groups who identify as GTRSB. Moreover, disaggregation of data on ethnic Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students from the white ethnicity category is needed to support higher education institutions to fulfil public sector equality duties.

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Appendix 1: Reflective Aide Memoire

Area	Yes/No	Reflections	Actions
GTRSB communities are included in university access and participation plans or widening participation initiatives.			
University support for GTRSB students/communities is explicit.			
The university has explored and signed up to the GTRSB Pledge.			
There is ongoing dialogue and consultation with GTRSB students and staff to ensure their priorities are being addressed.			
Outreach activities engage with GTRSB communities and families; and there is a detailed long-term outreach plan, designed in collaboration with organisations and stakeholders, for how communities and families are engaged with including a detailed range of activities.			
Outreach activities start early in primary and secondary school.			
GTRSB students are included in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategies including awarding gap and progression/continuation initiatives.			
University diversity work is underpinned by an understanding of intersectionality and differing needs as it relates to GTRSB identities to avoid ‘essentialism’ and one size fits all initiatives.			
The university has separate enrolment categories (e.g. Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen, Boater – rather than one overarching ‘Traveller’ or ‘Gypsy’ category) so that universities can accurately monitor access, retention, and progression of students from Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater communities.			
There is an understanding that not all Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen, and Boaters will choose to ‘disclose’ their ethnicity and identity.			

The Student Union has an awareness of GTRSB communities and actively supports students from these communities.			
Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students are included in university anti-racist policies.			
Advance HE's Race Equality Charter framework is extended to include reference to Gypsy, Roma and Travellers and data on ethnicity is disaggregated.			
The university takes direct action to tackle and eliminate racism that is directed at Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students, staff, and communities.			
The university actively challenges anti-Gypsy, anti-Traveller, and anti-Roma discourses.			
University initiatives which focus on 'BAME' include minority ethnic groups including Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller students.			
Universities consider "how far is your university a 'safe space' for GTRSB students"			
Deficit models and 'stock stories' are challenged and there is an appreciation of the 'cultural wealth' of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen, and Boaters.			
Inclusive curriculum engages with the full range of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boater experiences avoiding the production of 'one story' narratives.			
The curriculum supports student's critical thinking about diversity and inequality including the structural factors which impact on the lived experiences and outcomes of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen, and Boaters.			
University promotes positive and non-stereotypical representations of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen, and Boaters in their literature, their university spaces, pedagogical practice, and in the curriculum.			

The curriculum promotes critical thinking on the production of knowledge about Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen, and Boaters; and critically reflects upon whose voices are heard.			
The curriculum does not contribute to the ‘othering’ and ‘exotification’ of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen, and Boaters.			
The wide range of contributions that GTRSB communities make to the United Kingdom (and across Europe and other countries) are acknowledged and valued in the curriculum.			
The library and reading lists contain works by GTRSB authors and academics.			
University supports Roma, Showmen, Boater, Traveller, and Gypsy-led knowledge production.			
University promotes and celebrates Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month and other celebrations such as World Fun Fair Month.			
University acknowledges the persecution and genocide of Romani peoples during Holocaust Memorial Day and International Roma Remembrance Day.			
University engages with GTRSB groups and organisations to co-produce training for staff and sessions for students. Payments should be offered.			
The voices of GTRSB students and staff are heard within the university.			
All staff are encouraged to deepen their knowledge of GTRSB communities and reflect upon bias enabling ‘critical unlearning’.			
Appropriate resources are available for staff on Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen, and Boaters.			
Mentoring support is available for GTRSB students.			
University support staff including wellbeing, catering, security, accommodation, academic skills, employability, finance departments, admissions, extenuating circumstances			

have an awareness and understanding of GTRSB communities and offer appropriate and sensitive support to students from these communities.			
Funding and bursary streams are available for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen, and Boaters and they are explicitly named as potential applicants for bursaries.			
Positive action should be extended to Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen, and Boaters including pre and post application support, contextual offers, and inclusion in A' level/Highers tuition initiatives.			
Staff from GTRSB backgrounds are positively and pro-actively supported.			
A designated point of contact should be available for GTRSB students. This should be included in the person's workload allocation.			
Staff and students from GTRSB backgrounds are not expected to take responsibility for 'diversity work' and 'educating others'. If they choose to do this, support is available and recognition is given.			
Senior Managers ensure that support for GTRSB students is institutionalised as part of university strategy.			

Appendix 2: Selected List of Organisations

ACERT (Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and Other Travellers)

Website: <https://acert.org.uk/>

ACERT works to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children in the UK. They offer advice, support, and resources for educators and advocate for inclusive educational policies.

British Association of Social Workers (BASW)

Website: <https://www.childprotectionprofessionals.org.uk/special-interest-groups/>

Child Protection in Gypsy Roma, and Traveller Communities special interest group.

Cork Traveller Women's Network

Website: <https://ctwn.ie/>

A community development project working for Traveller rights, leadership, culture, and heritage.

European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network

Website: <https://ergonetwork.org/>

ERGO Network mobilizes and connects grassroots, national and international organisations and individuals who share a set of core values to create the courage, capacity, and opportunities to combat Antigypsyism and Roma poverty; strengthen Roma civil society participation in decision-making at grassroots, national and European level and commit governments and European institutions to effective social inclusion and anti-discrimination policies, standards, and funds for Roma.

Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT)

Website: <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/>

Service Directory: <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/services-directory/>

FFT works on behalf of Gypsies, Travellers, and Roma in the UK, providing advice, support, and advocacy services to address issues such as health, education, accommodation, and discrimination.

Future 4 Fairgrounds

Website: <https://www.future4fairgrounds.com/>

We are a group of six female showmen who have joined forces out of growing concern for the situation faced by the fairground industry and our community. Together, we have established Future 4 Fairgrounds with the aim of reaching out to a wider audience. Our objectives include celebrating our history, raising awareness of our current situation, and safeguarding our future. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNeUbCy7ql4>

GTRSB into Higher Education Pledge.

Website: <https://www.bucks.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-stand/gtrsb-higher-education-pledge>

Information on best practices in supporting Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman, and Boater communities in higher education.

Gypsies Travellers Wales

Website: <https://gtwales.org.uk/>

Support and enable Gypsies and Travellers to achieve a high quality and equitable standard of life. Provide support, advice, and advocacy to improve access to suitable accommodation, public services, and employment.

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Police Association (GRTPA)

Website: <https://grtpa.co.uk/>

The GRTPA is an organisation that supports Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller police officers and staff in the UK. They work to improve relations between these communities and the police and raise awareness of issues affecting these communities.

Irish Chaplaincy

Website: <https://www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk/irish-travellers>

Offer support and guidance to Irish Travellers especially to do with imprisonment.

National Bargee Travellers Association

Website: <https://www.bargee-traveller.org.uk/>

NBTA seeks to represent the interests of all itinerant live aboard boat dwellers – “Bargee Travellers”.

Papyrus

Website: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/gypsy-roma-traveller/>

Focus on mental health and suicide prevention.

Pavee Point

Website: <https://www.paveepoint.ie/>

Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre is a national non-governmental organisation comprised of Travellers, Roma and members of the majority population working in partnership at national, regional, local, and international levels.

Roma Support Group

Website: <https://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/>

The Roma Support Group is a charity working with Roma communities in the UK to promote integration, provide practical support, and advocate for their rights and well-being.

Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain

Website: <https://showmensguild.co.uk/>

The principal object of the Showmen’s Guild is to protect the interests of its members – travelling showmen who gain their livelihoods by attending funfairs

The Romani Cultural and Arts Company

Website: <https://www.romaniarts.co.uk/>

Community led development and educational organisation which aims to ensure that Gypsy, Roma & Traveller (GRT) communities can live in a more equal society. Promote advocacy through the Arts.

The Showmen’s Mental Health Awareness Charity

Website: <https://www.showmensmentalhealth.com/>

Charity founded and run by people from the Showmen and Fairground community. Their aim is to break the stigma around mental health in their community. This includes providing

support, information and mental health services to all Showmen in the UK and Ireland, (of all ages).

Traveller Movement

Website: <https://travellermovement.org.uk/>

The Traveller Movement is a charity that promotes inclusion and community engagement for Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers. They provide policy and research support, education, and legal advocacy.

Traveller Pride

Website: <https://www.lgbtravellerpride.com/exec>

Group made up of Travellers (used as inclusively as possible) who are LGBT+ (likewise) who want to provide a platform for their intersectional community. They act as a network that can provide guidance, support, and information to make life easier for LGBT+ Travellers as well as providing essential services, meetup spaces and collaborating with other organisations to make them more welcoming to us.

Travellers' Times

Website: <https://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/>

Travellers' Times is an online magazine and resource providing news, information, and resources for the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities in the UK.

Travelling Ahead: Wales Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Advice and Advocacy Service

Website: <https://www.tgpcymru.org.uk/what-we-do/travelling-ahead-wales-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-advice-and-advocacy-service/>

Advice, support, and individual and community advocacy working alongside Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families on issues such as accommodation, sites, planning, rights and accessing services.

Appendix 3: Selected Additional Resources

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Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT):
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Alliance against Antigypsyism: <https://Antigypsyism.eu/>

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Critical Romani Studies (journal): <https://crs.ceu.edu/index.php/crs>

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European Commission: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu_en

European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network: <https://ergonetwork.org/>

European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture: <https://eriac.org/>

Friends, Family and Travellers: <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/policy-publications/>

Friends, Family and Travellers: Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month –
<https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/grthm/>

Friends, Family and Travellers: <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/teaching-resources/>

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International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/>

International Journal of Roma Studies: <https://hipatiapress.com/hpjournals/index.php/ijrs/>

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Appendix 4: Feedback

To offer feedback on this handbook please complete the anonymous survey form. Feedback could include thoughts and reflections on the materials, ways to improve the materials and any impact that the handbook may have on practice and institutional policy. This feedback link is open to all and is anonymous. If you are unable to access the link, please contact Julia Morgan (j.e.morgan@greenwich.ac.uk) and she will send you the link.

Link: https://greenwichuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2iDeEINM2MZ98pw

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