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Consultation – summary of response

Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

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1. Introduction

On 21 September 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children launched a consultation on the draft *Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers* plan ('the Plan'), to seek views on proposals which are intended to develop and improve access to help, advice and services for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities across Wales. The aim of the consultation also aimed to tackle inequalities and poverty experienced by communities.

The final document will replace the 'Travelling to a Better future Framework for Action and Delivery Plan (2011)'.

2. Proposals

The consultation included proposals for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers which help to:

- improve social inclusion
- allow access to culturally-appropriate and good quality accommodation
- reduce the incidence and impact of unauthorised encampments and homelessness
- narrow the gap in educational and health outcomes
- promote understanding of rights and increase participation in decision-making
- support equal access to the labour market
- improve relationships with criminal justice and social care agencies.

3. Consultation

The consultation period ran from 28 September 2017 to 21 December 2017. On-line versions of the consultation document and response forms were provided. We also allowed some late responses to ensure the widest possible range of responses was considered.

Nine questions were set out in a document which was available online and which could be returned either in hard copy or by email.

We received 41 written responses to the consultation from organisations and individuals. This included 4 anonymous responses from local authorities and 4 anonymous responses from members of the public, in addition to the organisations listed below:

Written Respondents	
Estyn	Bournemouth University
Hywel Dda Health Board	South Wales Police
Three Welsh National Park Authorities	Merthyr CBC
Planning Aid Wales	Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru
Torfaen County Council	Community Law Partnership
Wrexham County Council (Housing & Economy)	Swansea City Council (Housing)
Reaching Partnerships across Wales Programme	Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council
Dyfed Powys Police	North Wales Police
Flintshire County Council	NHS Centre for Equality and Human Resources
Travelling Ahead – Tros Gynnal Plant	Ceredigion County Council
Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team Wales	Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cardiff Council	Equality Human Rights Commission
Powys Teaching Health Board	Swansea Traveller Education Group
Gypsies and Travellers Wales	Powys CBC
Gwent Police	Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service
Caerphilly CBC	Welsh Local Government Association
South Wales PCC	

In addition to the written responses detailed above, we conducted consultation sessions with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members across Wales. Consultation took the form of individual interviews on 1 private and 6 Local Authority sites and 5 focus groups with different communities. In total, 48 community members were directly interviewed as part of the consultation process. The Welsh Government funded organisation Tros Gynnal Plant also undertook some separate but additional consultation with Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities across Wales bringing the overall number of community members interviewed up to 94, including children and young people.

We also undertook three consultation workshops in Llandudno Junction, Swansea and Treforest. These events were intended to increase understanding amongst delegates to ensure well-informed written responses were submitted. The events also provided general comments regarding the consultation. A list of the organisations which sent representatives to these events can be found in **Annex A**.

This document summarises the responses to the consultation questions. It aims to give an overview of the breadth and depth of responses, and to provide an indication of the issues which were raised most frequently. While this document can only provide a short summary of the responses, each of the responses has been a vital resource for the Welsh Government in developing the final document.

4. Responses to consultation questions

These responses to proposals summarise comments from the written representations, on-site consultations and the engagement events which were held across Wales.

4.1 Do you agree with the actions within 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers? Please explain the reasons for your answer in the further comments box provided.

Summary of written responses

45% of respondents to this question indicated that they agreed, whilst 42% said they 'mostly' agreed with the actions within the draft Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. Of the remaining responses, 8% gave no indication of their preference and 5% disagreed with the proposals.

Of the 87% who agreed and mostly agreed with proposals, there were a variety of observations about the Plan and numerous questions and suggestions about what might or might not be included in the final Plan. Much of this is expanded upon under the summary of responses to other consultation questions. Some of the observations made included being in agreement with and supportive of the overall aims and direction of the Plan. The Plan was very aspirational but more concise, streamlined and clearer than its predecessor. Whilst many were supportive of Welsh Government strategic goals, overall, it was felt the aims were very broad and did not specifically address how many of the issues affecting the Community would be overcome.

In general, the draft proposals were welcomed, however there was a suggestion that the Plan would benefit from a more comprehensive narrative as was contained in its predecessor 'Travelling to a Better future' (TTABF). A brief summary of key achievements since the publication of TTABF would also be helpful. There was an acknowledgement that the plan had been delayed due to the publication of the Welsh government overarching National Strategy 'Prosperity for All', and an understanding that a number of actions within the plan now appeared outdated and would need to be updated before the final plan was published.

Caerphilly CBC felt that the proposals were building on the good work previously undertaken through TTABF and thereby provided an effective framework to further advance the rights and wellbeing of this marginalised community. One Local Authority felt that the document recognised key areas which needed to be strengthened, but added that ultimately, engagement with the community was at the heart of making significant progress, together with managing the views of the wider community. A few respondents welcomed the inclusion of migrant Roma within the Plan, but others felt that there should be a completely different set of proposals for this Group due to each community having different needs and Roma having more barriers in terms of immigration law and accessing services.

In contrast to other views, a number of respondents said the Plan was too broad with not enough 'actions' that had evidence of how they would be delivered and /or realistically achieved. They felt the actions should be more focussed on strategic priorities. One respondent said the Plan possibly inadvertently felt as though it was trying to change the culture of these communities with too many actions. However, another respondent felt that the Plan was not new, but a collection of actions from other existing Plans.

Some other comments included the view that the overarching aims and actions may not work on the ground due to them being relative to different geographies, communities and contexts;

also it was important to recognise that it had to be a 'two way street' – whilst society must play its part to help this group, they too need to try to integrate more with society themselves.

Of the 5% who disagreed with proposals, the reasons given were that Travellers had their own community and the Welsh Government failed to understand their culture.

Summary of community member responses

Following consultation with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members, it emerged that the vast majority of community respondents who were interviewed via ad-hoc visits to Gypsy and Traveller sites had not previously heard of 'Travelling to a Better Future'.

However, a number of consultation engagement events were held with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities across Wales. These were attended and supported by the Welsh Government-funded Travelling Ahead project at Tros Gynnal Plant. The project provides an advice and advocacy service to these communities. Tros Gynnal Plant also carried out some separate consultation via small focus groups and discussions. Although many had not previously seen the document, they felt that a 'new' plan was a good idea, but were still to be convinced that strategies actually make a difference to their everyday lives. Many welcomed the opportunity to contribute and get their voices heard but queried what difference it was going to make and they wanted reassurances that actions agreed at Government level would cascade to a local level to really make a difference to their lives.

4.2 Our aim is that everyone will have the opportunity to reach their full potential and lead a healthy, prosperous and fulfilling life, enabling them to participate fully in their communities and contribute to the future economic success of Wales. How can we better achieve this for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers?

Summary of written responses

There was a diverse range of responses to this question depending on how the question was interpreted by the respondent. Responses ranged from suggestions and comments in relation to health issues, to accessing and receiving education and undertaking awareness training; from being able to live in suitable accommodation; or being able to fully integrate and participate more effectively within the communities in which they lived, amongst other issues.

In relation to Education, it was clear that many respondents felt that it was important to ensure that Gypsies, Roma and Travellers had their culture reflected in the school environment; but they felt there were inadequate resources to properly encourage and integrate learners into the school environment. At one of the stakeholder engagement events, the point was made that there was no ring fenced funding within the education budget for these communities. Many felt that educating all school staff and other pupils about their culture would have a positive impact upon learners, whilst others felt that this could prompt a more hostile environment with children and young people from these communities being bullied once their ethnicity was revealed if it was not already known.

Estyn specifically referred to the recommendations in their March 2011 report 'The Education of Gypsy Traveller pupils' in which they highlighted that improving pupils' attendance and their attitudes at school are important factors in improving Gypsy and Traveller pupils' outcomes. They felt it was important to strengthen the emphasis in the Plan on addressing

these issues specifically. *Flintshire Council* made the point that continued funding for services such as Tros Gynnal Plant and the Travelling Ahead Project, together with Traveller Education Services were vital for young people to continue to engage in education. The organisation *Reaching Partnerships* added that more help was needed to raise awareness to these communities about educational pathways in further and higher education institutions and the support network which was available.

In relation to health, some respondents suggested that consideration should be given to the creation of Health Liaison Officers in order to help build relationships between Health Services and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The point was made that there should be a single point of contact within all Local Health Boards for day to day issues affecting these communities.

Some health boards asked for clarification around the proposed equality and cultural awareness training and further clarification on the monitoring and uptake of training required as they did not wish for exceptional pressures to be placed on the service.

The proposed introduction of ethnicity categories into local operational systems was welcomed and the introduction of a specific Gypsy and Traveller Health Care Plan was suggested. A further suggestion made in relation to health was that Local Authorities should include these communities in their health and well being plans. It was also important that consistent services were available between boroughs/areas so families knew what was available to access if moving between sites.

The matter of continued funding to support the provision of Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators' roles beyond March 2018 was raised by a significant amount of respondents. There was also a suggestion for the Coordinators to broaden their roles to undertake more of a regional lead and responsibility for the co-ordination of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller support.

Merthyr Council felt that the aims within the Plan would not be achieved without gaining the trust of these communities. Similar views were shared by other respondents. More work was also needed to build relations between different communities.

Tros Gynnal Plant suggested there was a need for more imaginative community based approaches, such as family fun engagement style events to allow for raising cultural awareness and breaking down barriers with other communities. They also felt it was important for mandatory cultural awareness training to be put in place for elected members who were making decisions around for example housing and/or planning issues. In the same manner, at one of the stakeholder engagement events it was suggested that community members should undertake training to appreciate and understand local government processes and timescales.

The NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights (Public Health Wales) felt it was important to work with community members as equal partners to co-design, produce and deliver solutions and strengthen their ongoing participation in the future economic success of Wales. This would allow them to fully participate in society, the economy and decision making processes.

Many felt that cultural awareness and engagement training for all frontline services was particularly important especially for those who had closest contact with these Communities. It was crucial that communities were consulted with and not dictated to and kept involved in developments. In this vein, a number of respondents felt that a single point of contact on site and/or in relation to contact with Local Authorities and other services was paramount.

There was a suggestion to include representation from a variety of areas which impacted on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities such as health, social care and education, at the All-Wales Accommodation Forum, which would encourage inter-agency working and prompt discussion and action in the relevant areas.

Summary of community member responses

The majority of community members confirmed that they had not experienced discrimination when accessing health services, including GP appointments, and dentists. They highlighted that sometimes appointments were hard to secure, but this was due to lack of appointments. However, community members within one Local Health Board area commented that they felt they had been discriminated against by health professionals, as on occasion they had not been able to secure an 'on-call' appointment from their GP, and on one site it was stated that midwives would not visit the site for antenatal check ups, and expectant mothers were instead asked to attend their local Flying Start health centre. Community members highlighted that they wanted more health visitors to visit sites to reach the people who are unable to travel (through lack of public transport to sites, no car or footpaths). Other suggestions included the potential to build more social buildings on site, so that community members would be able to disclose health issues privately. The majority of Roma respondents, however, felt they had experienced discrimination when accessing services such as GPs and dentists.

It was suggested that language was a clear barrier when accessing health services at times. However it was cited that 'Language Line' was an option to overcome this and had worked effectively in GP surgeries. Members suggested that health boards must ensure that GP surgeries and staff were aware of their responsibilities to ensure access to health services. Community members told Tros Gynnal Plant that on occasions, 'pride' can be a significant barrier to reporting anything serious before it is too late. Women and men both seek advice from peers regarding lumps or changes in their body and leave it too late to seek help. Community members feel they need educating on what to look for with breast, prostate and testicular cancer, as well as other illnesses. Respondents also identified that there was a need for help completing medical forms and a suggestion that discreet 'unable to read' cards would be beneficial for some community members.

With regards to education, it was felt that educating settled community schoolchildren on Gypsy, Roma or Traveller culture could be counterproductive, as it could further highlight any differences, and potentially lead to bullying. A few respondents disclosed that their children had experienced bullying at school. However, one community member had also decided to home school her child due to bullying from other Gypsy or Traveller children for choosing to attend school. One individual believed that they had been "persecuted" by a school teacher. However, other respondents at a separate event felt it would be beneficial to include books/information about their culture within schools; visits to the school by Community members may help and equally visits by schools to sites. Young people consulted saw school as a place where learning about your rights and participation should start, and schools should take an active role in training more children on their rights. Schools should let non-Traveller children know about the culture and rights. Young people also thought that their "families should have more of a voice".

Tros Gynnal Plant highlighted that respondents revealed that children often need one to one support to help them to catch up with other classmates. Some parents feel that their children's time is being wasted in classes which separate Gypsy, Roma or Traveller pupils

from others, or where dedicated help is provided which aims to support these pupils to catch up with others. Some community members felt these classes were little more than “colouring books and doing noughts and crosses”. Some community members expressed that they do not see the need to study traditional subjects, e.g. English, Maths and Science, as they feel this would not benefit them in their likely careers. A suggestion included the rollout of subjects that were more relevant to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, would help them believe that there is a place for them within education. This could also be accompanied by assistant teachers in class (either from these communities or elsewhere).

Sometimes, the lack of school transport was a significant barrier to children attending their local school. Another barrier in terms of adult education was the lack of childcare, and it was stated that childcare arrangements should be in place to encourage participation in education. Many young people from these communities struggled with homework as they don't have access to computer systems. It was suggested that a scheme to look at the provision of equipment would help even if this was a shared facility. It was suggested that a school liaison officer in schools might act as an interface between the school, these communities and the settled community.

4.3 We want everyone to live in a home that meets their needs and supports a healthy, successful and prosperous life. How can we better achieve this for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers?

Summary of written responses

There was a shared view that when there was a lack of suitable and appropriate accommodation with good living conditions and basic amenities, it had a detrimental impact in many ways. This could include a range of areas such as general health and wellbeing, school attendance, access to training or employment and it could also prevent efforts to foster good relations between communities.

A suggestion was made by one Local Authority to consider having standards of accommodation which could be made universally applicable to ensure there was a consistent standard for living and housing regardless of the choice of type of home. It was felt that the continued monitoring and delivery of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) would help to ensure delivery of the identified need – but it was important that funding continued to be available via the sites capital grant in order to build new and refurbish existing sites.

Some respondents felt it was important for community members to be able to comment on the review and continued monitoring of the GTAAAs and *Tros Gynnal Plant* suggested producing an easy read GTAA annual review report. *Tros Gynnal Plant* also said community members felt excluded from local plans and strategies in relation to ‘Homes for All’. It would also be helpful if community members could be better informed about the work taking place under the Sites Capital Grant and how that was meeting local need. There was also an issue of access to quality and affordable rented mobile homes. A suggestion was made for Welsh Government to research how this could be regularised. In a similar vein, migrant Roma also needed access to good quality housing but informal letting arrangements are currently preventing this.

A number of respondents shared the view that in order to combat the discrimination community members' experienced when seeking planning permission, better support was

needed for them to be able to use the planning system and potentially secure planning permission to develop private sites. Currently there is no access to the sites capital grant in order to develop a private site and a few respondents enquired whether this should be reconsidered. There was a suggestion for Local Authorities to be made more accountable for ensuring the relevant support was available to develop private sites. Also, it was suggested that an annual review of Gypsy and Traveller planning applications was carried out.

In relation to unauthorised encampments and the provision of transit sites, there was an observation that there had been little progress in the development of transit sites thus far. It was felt that improved engagement with those who utilise them would be beneficial as it was likely that the 'users' would not be regular residents of any one local authority area. It was also crucial that transit sites had the right facilities on them which were culturally acceptable.

Stakeholders at engagement events carried out across Wales were of the view that there should be a more helpful, clearer and improved planning application assistance given when completing applications for private sites. They expressed a view that there was a need for revenue funding to be provided to support the management of sites generally, to ensure good standards were achieved. Ultimately it was extremely important to be able to meet the different homelessness needs of the community in a culturally sensitive manner, by working with them and involving them in all developments and decisions regarding their accommodation needs. They emphasised the need to have safe, accessible and legal transit provision in areas across Wales where there was a need/requirement. In line with this it was important for the sites capital grant to respond to what was needed in a particular area as relevant.

Summary of community member responses

Community members in various regions expressed their frustration at the difficulty in securing planning permission for sites. One community member suggested there should be a young Traveller or a Gypsy person on the planning committee. It was commented that many Gypsy and Traveller people know how to build good quality private sites and felt they are better standards than the local council sites. The community felt that their right to a home is not considered on an equal basis as other citizens of Wales. Better support and more open processes needs to be in place to combat the discrimination they experience when seeking planning permission. Some families commented that Welsh Government and local strategies/plans to improve, provide and build new accommodation for Wales citizens rarely included them – they feel excluded from the idea of 'Homes for All'. Some communities felt they should not be under 'Hostels and Homeless' due to having a home to live in and a permanent place to site their home. There was also an issue regarding continued investment in site maintenance as Council sites are not considered to be a form of social housing. Other community members' view was that mainstream housing managers do not understand the differences when managing sites for instance and that more local bespoke management arrangements in partnership with the community or families that live on a site were required.

On-site issues identified included the lack of mobile phone signal and internet / broadband access at certain sites. Respondents from a number of different sites also commented that any maintenance issues sometimes took a significant time to be resolved. One respondent highlighted that her own electric bills were extortionate (around £50 per week) and could not currently access any reductions as there are not direct billing arrangements between pitch holders and energy companies, and asked for help with this matter.

Community members attending the Maindee Primary School event shared that they were often living in sub-standard properties with little control over maintenance problems due to their landlords attitude to improvements. They felt that landlords were often charging high amounts of rent in the local area.

In relation to transit provision, community members felt there was a need for more transit sites although they needed to be properly planned and in the right places. Also different transit sites were needed for different communities. If transit sites are built, community members emphasised they need to have wardens and are monitored properly, as rivaling families could pull on and either cause conflict, or make other families go elsewhere, negating the point of the transit site. Conversely, some members voiced that they don't feel they need more transit sites as they have their own informal stopping places. Potential issues and concerns identified included whether there would be bin collections to remove waste, and whether there would be a safe place for children to play. One member also queried who would move families on after their time on the site had passed.

4.4 We want Wales to have a high quality and sustainable social care sector, with preventative and integrated services in the community, supporting people to lead independent lives. How can we better achieve this for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers?

Summary of written responses

There was a suggestion that all staff working within social care services and also related areas such as Police and medical services should undertake training in relation to cultural awareness.

There was a suggestion that integrating these communities into more mainstream events with the settled community would enable everyone to better understand each others' cultural differences and needs. This could include educating communities about what support they were able to access and a programme of site visits by support agencies to sites on a regular basis and continued sharing of information between agencies. A long term local and national multi-agency approach was a view shared by a number of respondents. However, due to lower literacy levels experienced by some community members, many services (including vital mobile and static services) were being 'missed' by community members.

One Local Authority said that consideration should be given to additional funding being made available for liaison/mediation roles that could help to balance support and integration to essential services. In this respect, one Local Authority said that where Local Authorities had liaison officers, they would have a role to play in contributing to the aim of building bridges between services and Community members. They also emphasised the need to ensure that adult, older people and disabled persons as well as children's services were reflected in the Plan going forward.

Tros Gynnal Plant felt that the starting point needed to be addressing the lack of trust felt by these communities and ensuring that social services worked more proactively and positively to demonstrate the kinds of support which were available such as care for the elderly, for those with disabilities and also children and young people. At the same time, social services needed to be culturally aware and appropriate, recognising the values, strengths and resilience of families within these communities as well. *Tros Gynnal Plant* highlighted some recent research from England which indicated an increase in numbers of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in care or being adopted, which contributed to the lack of trust and a sense

that these families were being judged differently. They felt it was important for Children's Services to look more closely at this issue, exclusively to Wales. *Tros Gynnal Plant* also said they would welcome some further research to be carried out which would ultimately enable more support for young community members who were in the youth justice system.

At the stakeholder engagement events, a significant amount of comments and suggestions made via written representations were echoed. There was a shared view for example, that community members needed support to understand their rights and to also appreciate the help and support networks available to them.

Summary of community member responses

In general, community respondents that had involvement with social services were positive regarding their experiences, with the exception of one respondent who felt that their neighbour's child was taken into care unnecessarily. The main reason for respondents' involvement with social services was due to securing extra care and support for elderly family members, enabling them to access adaptive living.

However, some community members who spoke with *Tros Gynnal Plant* felt that they were being targeted more in recent times by social services, feeling that community members are being "forcefully adopted". They believed this was down to the lack of cultural understanding, and feeling forced to live a lifestyle that incorporated social workers' guidelines, creating barriers for these families to stay true to their culture.

4.5 We want to ensure that mental health problems are not a barrier to achieving potential in all areas of life. How can we better achieve this for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers?

Summary of written responses

Mental Health actions were highlighted as a key gap within *Enabling Gypsies Roma and Travellers*. Mental Health was seen as a major barrier to these communities achieving their full potential in life. As was gauged from consultation with community members via engagement events and ad-hoc visits, the consensus was that the whole area of mental health carried a stigma which the community did not wish to identify with. With high levels of mental health and depression amongst the Community, it was suggested that an outreach service and/or more flexible health support service should be available in a non-stigmatising way to those who needed it.

Torfaen Council alluded to the fact that mental health is very much stigmatised within this group of individuals, which can often be a big obstacle when accessing services. For these reasons, it was paramount that key workers/relationships were secured in order for any concerns to be disclosed and acted upon. It was agreed that additional funding and promotion of mental health services would help to remove the stigma and would also be considered a tool for identifying early signs and making early referrals. Again, as mentioned previously, many shared the view that the creation of a liaison/mediation officer would help to support all health issues and challenges including supporting mental health difficulties and the challenge of reducing associated stigma and prejudice.

Merthyr Council were of the view that breaking the cycle was essential and early intervention was key to this – education in schools from a young age was absolutely crucial. In

conjunction with this, physical activity was also important to increase the chances of individuals living a more healthy and active lifestyle.

Many of the Professional stakeholders at consultation engagement events felt that isolation played a big factor in this area, particularly with women and especially if they were living reluctantly in bricks and mortar. The lack of transport issue to be able to access services was also a recurring theme. In line with similar comments through written responses, it was felt that promoting positive mental health from an early age would help to better support both mental and physical health. The idea of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller role models might also help to support breaking down the stigma barriers with the element of trust being a significant contributory factor leading to potential disclosure.

Summary of community member responses

It was widely suggested that male members of these communities were more likely to experience mental health problems. It was suggested that this still has a stigma attached. Whilst many confirmed they knew to visit their local GP to discuss any mental health issues in the first instance, a community member in Pembrokeshire felt there was a lack of support for men in dealing with any mental health issues within the area. Suggestions for overcoming such barriers included bespoke training for mental health nurses and the promotion of community school based early intervention.

Whilst conducting consultation events, community members commented to *Tros Gynnal Plant* that the reporting of domestic violence is very slowly increasing. A significant barrier of non-reporting can be attributed to women worrying that their children could potentially be taken into care. A young person commented that the problem was “we keep things to our self so don't get help when we need it”.

4.6 Every person should be equipped with the skills they need to get a job and the opportunity to develop new skills through their working life. How can we better achieve this for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers?

Summary of written responses

It was acknowledged that self-employment was quite often favoured, as opposed to being employed by a company or organisation. As such, many young people from these communities were encouraged to progress into the family business, tending to be ready for work at a very young age. There was a strong view that children needed to be supported to access and sustain full time education. In order to do this, the issue of low attendance at school needed to be addressed so that the cycle of being social excluded could be broken.

It was felt that both early years and the foundation phase were essential, acting as building blocks to educating children and young people. However, it was noted that associated mainstream programmes such as 'Flying Start' did not always adopt a flexible approach or recognise the extra support that may be required by these communities.

A number of respondents felt that engaging these communities in the life of their local schools could open up a wealth of opportunities and career prospects, not only for the children and young people but also for their parents and other community members. Participation in education visits for example and/or extra-curricular activities could lead to increased education, knowledge and skills which would not only help community members to

support their children and families, but also provide them with the skills they needed to secure training, apprenticeships or employment. Police colleagues also questioned whether there was a role for the All Wales Schools Programme in narrowing the gap in educational outcomes for these communities. It was also felt that the idea of utilising community role models to promote messages of achievement and aspiration in schools and to cascade these messages was a positive idea which could be further developed.

The organisation '*Reaching Wider Partnerships*' suggested further development of Community based opportunities, where the learning and skills could be taken to the learners, might help to encourage participation and retention.

In relation to successfully securing a job, apprenticeship or even training, some respondents' comments in relation to this question, mirrored what was repeatedly mentioned at the engagement events with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This was that historically, there had been significant difficulties in obtaining and/or accessing training, apprenticeships or employment once the provider was aware of the applicant's ethnicity or address or both; or the fact that they were unable to provide an address at all. In response to this issue, a couple of respondents made the suggestion for employers to consider introducing 'address blind' recruitment.

Respondents fully endorsed and supported the need for equal access to the jobs and the labour market. The idea of jobs fairs held on sites or close by was mentioned and in particular the potential replication of an annual fare which was held at Shirenewton, Cardiff. This was attended by numerous employers including services such as Fire, Ambulance, Police, Health, Schools, education, dog and horse wardens etc. to raise awareness, educate and provide information about opportunities and prospects.

Some respondents felt that the 'Childcare Offer' being piloted by Welsh Government could help to encourage and support these communities into work, providing it was launched alongside other measures including help, advice and guidance in relation to potential work availability and opportunities. Others were supportive of the idea but felt its success could be limited due to cultural norms and gender roles.

It was widely accepted that there remained real difficulties with establishing and securing literacy support and digital inclusion, which was absolutely crucial in order to develop the skills they needed to be in a position to apply for and successfully secure a job. Knowing how to access employment opportunities could be a real struggle in itself, for some adults in the community.

Problems with Broadband and the general lack of support in relation to IT skills etc. often left community members in need of support to be able to access their rights and entitlements including their benefits, universal credit and job seeking/work programmes. In addition the geography of sites and lack of transport links exacerbated these issues.

Professional stakeholder engagement events reiterated many of the points that were raised by written respondents to the consultation. They also commented that being able to access suitable accommodation had a significant bearing on attending any type of education, training or employment. They made the point that forcing new skills on these communities was not appropriate and instead suggested enhancing, improving and building on existing (and potentially traditional) skills.

They felt it was important to work closely with communities and involve them in decisions about their education, skills and their own futures; assisting them, for example, with starting their own businesses or certification of skills to enable work to be carried out in a safe and legal manner.

Summary of community member responses

A high number of respondents shared that they or a relative of theirs had faced discrimination when applying for jobs once they had revealed their address. In one instance, a respondent had found work but was later dismissed when their background was revealed. A few respondents suggested that 'address blind' applications may be something to consider in the future. Conversely, one respondent shared that they would like to see 'GRT' as an ethnicity option on job applications.

With regards to training, one respondent shared that her son had attended college to gain qualifications but was not given the opportunity to apply for an apprenticeship as "employers know who we are" and were therefore reluctant to offer opportunities. The same family commented that older family members had been discouraged from studying as they believed employers would not employ them. It was suggested that some kind of open day/s or mini careers fairs would help to encourage sign up/participation, and provide advice on benefit eligibility too. Another suggestion include outreach sessions; various organisations could go to sites to publicise what help is available although it was accepted that this may not be so practical. One community respondent suggested that short taster courses could be considered and also access to vocational qualifications.

The availability/ access to apprenticeships within Welsh Government was also raised, as was the possibility of shadowing within Welsh Government as a useful insight into public sector working.

4.7 The Welsh Government wants to ensure that as many Gypsies, Roma and Travellers as possible are made aware of the proposals within 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers' and are able to understand it. In your view, what is the best way to communicate the published document to members of these communities and are different communication methods required for each community?

Summary of written responses

Overall the consensus was that social media, internet/website and face to face via voluntary organisations, were most likely to be the best ways to communicate the final published document to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Some responses specified further, that social media and the internet may potentially reach more young people only, whilst key messages could be delivered face to face by voluntary organisations in an advocate role, to the older generation. There was an additional suggestion that the key messages of the published document should be delivered directly by Welsh Government face to face via focus groups and door to door visits. However the point was made that face to face contact should only be made with a person of trust.

A number of respondents suggested the idea of a short film or video presentation providing a snapshot of the main themes emerging from the published document. Consideration would of course need to be given to providing this in different languages, as well as the published document itself. An easy read version of the document delivered to sites, again by persons of

trust could work, as often, anything that was posted to sites was not delivered to individual households.

Other suggestions included the document and/or key messages being delivered through publication in Travellers Times, through the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, Traveller Movement and via Friends, Families and Travellers.

Two respondents said they felt only community members could answer this question.

In addition to the above, other ideas put forward by colleagues attending engagement events included the idea of an 'audio' message, an information pack (which may have to be delivered to sites and explained), a short film or DVD involving people from these communities, a roadshow with the private interview facility and a small leaflet/booklet highlighting the main emerging themes.

Stakeholders made the point that it was everyone's duty (multi-agency), to promote the published document. That said, it was important to adopt and ensure consistent face to face communication by trusted people such as Traveller Education Services. They felt it would be a good opportunity to use large gatherings of community members such as fairs, so that as many community members as possible would become aware of the proposals. Finally, distribution via Local Authorities was felt to be a feasible option.

Summary of community member responses

Community members suggested that the finalised document could be cascaded via their Local Authorities. Alternative suggestions included notification of the published document via social media, or even a short DVD, as suggested by Welsh Government.

4.8 Can you identify any additional effects of this document (positive or adverse) on the Welsh Language, Equality or Children's Rights? To assist with this you will need to refer to the Equality and Child Rights impact assessments which accompany this questionnaire. Please explain your view and any suggestions for how the document could be revised so that positive effects could be increased and negative effects mitigated?

Summary of written responses

The point was made that Gypsies, Roma and Travellers were very different communities and homogenizing and including them together was not reflective of their varying and disparate cultures.

Some respondents shared the view that the actions within the document should be undertaken in a way which reflected the diverse needs of these communities and should be tailored to specific needs. It was felt that work needed to be undertaken to ensure that cultural beliefs should not act as barriers to the community benefitting from the proposals.

There was a view that more support in the form of advice or advocacy may be required to support newly arrived Roma, who may be at risk of falling out of the benefit system, especially if they had recently lost or were unable to secure employment.

Caerphilly Council were of the view that the Plan would have a positive impact on the Welsh Language, equality issues and children's rights. However, as the majority of the issues Welsh Government were attempting to address through the Plan were experienced by other sections of society, they felt that many of the actions would be best served via an overarching approach which promoted prosperity and wellbeing for all.

A number of attendees at the professional stakeholder events reiterated the point that it was important to recognise and accommodate lower levels of literacy experienced by some in these communities. Hence there was a need for communication and language to be simple and, where possible, pictorial.

There was a comment that the Welsh Language could be a barrier to families who did not have any experience of the language so it was important that pupils were not discouraged from learning it. They felt that in line with respecting the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture and way of life, it was important to provide choices for these communities, for example school education or becoming homemakers.

Summary of community member responses

Community members were supportive of the promotion of the Welsh Language within their communities, and agreed that if evening classes were offered, community members could be likely to participate. Another suggestion was that Welsh speaking members of these communities could speak on film with a view to changing perceptions

4.9 We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related Issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Summary of written responses

A few respondents expressed discontent with the proposed title of the new document. *Estyn* suggested changing it to "Working Together with Gypsies, Roma and Travellers" which they felt would better reflect the involvement of these communities in developing and taking forward new actions including future aspirations of increased education and employment.

Tros Gynal Plant said that losing the title 'Travelling to a Better Future' would have some negative impacts but were hopeful that the aims of the new Plan would be communicated in an accessible manner, with progress being reviewed and monitored easily.

There was some unease with the proposed combining Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities under one document and also inconsistent and fewer specific references to Roma throughout the document.

There was a request for the hate crime related actions to be strengthened to include an action to ensure the specific recording of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller hate crime also for broader work to be included in the actions.

There was also a call for new guidance on temporary stopping places as part of the new Gypsy and Traveller Show people circular. Also, consideration of the impact of demand for sites in Wales, in light of changes in the English planning system which assumes an individual is not a Traveller if they are no longer travelling.

Further information was sought about a number of other specific areas, including guidance around transit sites and the related issues of crossing local authority boundaries and a call for more consistent and direct means of billing for utilities on residential sites.

In addition, there were also a number of areas and potential actions that were highlighted as gaps within the document. These included:

How Brexit will affect these communities; the inclusion of participation in sporting activities; Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual violence; Older People; Disability; Reducing Offending; Animal Welfare; and Reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Summary of community member responses

In addition to the questions raised, a respondent from Welshpool felt it would be a beneficial if '7-8 female community members and 7-8 female settled community members got together to understand the other persons views on a variety of topics in order to better educate one another'. A number of respondents were supportive of a fun event, co-ordinated / facilitated by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to engage the wider community and improve relations. Another suggestion was to launch a website similar to Facebook in the home language which could be useful. Such a website could include short video clips about accessing benefits and services such as doctors and dentists (maybe read to the person in the home language if that was an option).

A number of respondents commented on their interaction with the police. Some respondents felt a PCSO presence would be a good support mechanism. Another respondent confirmed that a PCSO attends their site once a month to discuss any issues. A respondent from the Roma community shared that there was a general feeling that the Police would favour Welsh citizens in any dispute. It was suggested that a Police single point of contact (SPOC) on a long term placement would be beneficial.

Community members said they felt discriminated against in certain public areas, including restaurants and pubs. They had also experienced discrimination from taxis refusing to come to the site, and the lack of deliveries to sites. They often felt patronised by the wider community because of their accents. Roma community members had expressed concerns about the effects of Brexit and the possible implications it may have for their community.

A number of respondents commented on the need for more advice on benefits and the new Universal Credit system – would it cover both caravans and plot land, for example. It was also highlighted that food banks were used but more people would use them if it was less shameful, if there was a more private way to access the food banks.

One community member commented that the plan did not include anything about sporting activity, and suggested that a key sporting figure from their community, Samson Lee could lead a sport campaign to encourage participation by others.

5. Concluding remarks

The consultation responses demonstrated general support for the draft *Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers* proposals. The issues raised above have provided the Welsh Government with many opportunities to improve the final version of the document. Although some contradictory suggestions were received, there were many areas of consensus.

We would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to respond to the consultation by sending in a written response, participating in an on-site consultation or by attending a consultation workshop. We are very grateful to everyone for their contributions. Thank you especially to those who agreed to participate in the process in their own homes and to the organisations who helped with the facilitation of both joint and separate focus groups.

6. Next Steps

A copy of this consultation summary will be sent to each of the respondents to the consultation, including to sites where residents participated and to organisations who facilitated focus groups. The consultation summary will also be published on the Welsh Government's website.

The Welsh Government will utilise the consultation responses to consider what changes should be made to the draft document. It is anticipated, the final *Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers* document will be published in June to coincide with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month.

Annex A

The tables below show the organisations which attended the consultation events held in October and November 2017

QED Centre, Treforest – 16 October 2017
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Bridgend County Borough Council
The Bridges Project
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cardiff City Council
Childrens Commissioner for Wales
Garden Court Legal Chambers
Gypsies and Travellers Wales
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Monmouthshire County Council
Newport City Council
National Health Service
Planning Aid Wales
Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council
Torfaen County Borough Council
Tros Gynnal Plant
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Service
Llandudno Junction – 7 November
Anglesey County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
CPS
Flintshire Council
Gwynedd Council
National Health Service
Powys County Council
RCCC, Anglesey County Council
Tros Gynnal Plant
Wrexham County Council
Snowdonia National Park
Swansea - 9 November
Bridgend County Borough Council
Carmarthenshire County Council
Ceredigion County Council
Neath Port Talbot County Council
Pembrokeshire County Council
RCCC. Swansea
Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council
Swansea County Council
Tros Gynnal Plant
Welsh Local Government Association

During these sessions the proposals were discussed and delegates shared their initial thoughts regarding the consultation document.