

Hate: “As regular as rain”

A pilot research project into the psychological effects of hate crime on Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) communities

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Foreword



I would first like to acknowledge all of those who contributed to this pilot study, and recognise the members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities who have shown bravery in sharing experiences which have caused personal pain and suffering.

Hatred in any society is unacceptable. We are free to love, not free to hate. It saddened me to read the accounts detailing the horrific experiences of many brave individuals. That GRT people feel that hate crime is routine, or something to simply 'put up with' – and the clear negative impact that this has on their mental health – was just one of the report's many concerning findings.

This country has one of the strongest legislative frameworks in the world to protect all communities from hostility, violence and bigotry, and to deal with the perpetrators of hate crime. To further

strengthen this, the Government has asked the Law Commission to undertake a full review of the coverage and approach of current hate crime legislative provisions. The Commission's consultation is now open and aims to report in early 2021. I would encourage all interested parties – including GTR organisations – to take part.

But this work doesn't stop with legislative changes alone. I am proud that we have been able to support GATE Herts to improve reporting of GRT hate crime by GRT communities by victims from these communities, with nearly £150,000 funded in this and last year. Indeed, since 2018 Government has committed more than £1.5 million for projects to tackle racially and religiously motivated hatred. This includes working with young people in schools and other settings to tackle the root cause of all discrimination and prejudice. And, because we know that GRT communities under-report hate

crime, we have worked with the police to create a specific GRT reporting page on their hate crime reporting portal, True Vision.

The impact of Covid-19 has hit every community and place across the country. I have been working hard to ensure that GRT voices are heard across all Government departments – to ensure the needs of GRT people are reflected in both the response and recovery planning.

As is commonly known, on almost every measure, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are significantly worse off than the general population. We are working to address the disparities faced by GRT people to ensure that they have the same life chances as other members of the community. Despite the pressures of Covid-19, this Government has committed to delivering a cross-government strategy to tackle these inequalities. We

will work closely with all stakeholders within and outside of Government to develop this work.

Finally, I would like to thank the authors of this work for such a timely and important publication.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Greenhalgh'.

Lord Stephen Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building
Safety and Communities

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We are also profoundly grateful to colleagues from Friends Families and Travellers (with a particular mention for Sarah Sweeney) and the Traveller Movement, who most generously shared information drawn from their own research with us and participated in consultation activities as we developed the project.

Our warmest thanks and deepest gratitude are due to the GATE Herts 'Social Changemakers' and staff team; and in particular we'd like to acknowledge the advice, guidance and vision of Josie O'Driscoll CEO of the organisation. Other source of knowledge and support include Travellers Times; Leeds Gate; Roma Support Group; Romani Cultural and Arts Company, Sam Worrall (working with boater populations); Lisa Smith and others who shared information, disseminated our request for participants and who were always very engaged with, and supportive of, this project.

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We were also fortunate enough in July 2020 to host/support two young A Level students via the Nuffield Foundation 'Future Researchers'

project for a fortnight. During this period of time out visiting (virtual) students Ladan Hussein and Hannah Esan enthusiastically and competently provided input for the study's literature review and undertook analysis of social media trends in relation to hate speech/representation of GTR communities in arenas such as Twitter and Facebook. We wish them both well in their future academic studies and thank them for their input to this project that they selected and applied for, from a range of opportunities available to them. Our thanks to the Nuffield Foundation for reaching out to us, and offering an opportunity for 'future researchers' from diverse communities to find out more about the experiences and challenges facing members of the GTR communities, which in turn assists in enhancing understanding and breaking down stereotypes. Gratitude is also due to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for provision of funding, which has support this pilot project. We would also like to gratefully acknowledge Vicki Williams for proof reading and assisting with the provision of editorial comments.

Finally, if we have omitted to thank or acknowledge any of the many people who have provided input, advice or support for this project, or if we have failed to adequately represent the views of participants, the responsibility is ours alone. Please feel free to contact us with queries, amendments or questions.

Margaret Greenfields and Carol Rogers
July 2020

Executive Summary

Hate crime against Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) communities is described as almost a daily occurrence, "as regular as rain" as one respondent stated.

Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people have the worst outcomes of any ethnic group in Britain in relation to educational attainment, health and employment. They are also disproportionately represented within the criminal justice system. There are higher mortality rates and (anecdotally reported) incidences of suicide within GTR communities than are found amongst the wider British population. Exacerbating this situation, GTR people face everyday discrimination and hatred across all aspects of their lives, occurring in their engagement with public and private services and in their homes. A significant and increasing amount of hate speech is directed at GTR community members online.

There are notable upticks in hate speech (with associated impacts on wellbeing and mental health) associated with publicity around high profile criminal cases, media reporting of unauthorised encampments or negative political discourse and sensationalist television programmes.

Often referred to as the "last acceptable form of racism" (Traveller Movement, 2017), Gypsies, Travellers and Roma people continue to experience widespread prejudice and discrimination, so common that it is almost normalised and seen as a 'fact of life' (Women and Equalities Commission (WEC), 2019: Chapter 8), despite the fact that Romany Gypsies, Roma, Scottish Gypsies and Irish Travellers (although not Showmen, Boaters or New Travellers) are protected against discrimination as ethnic minority groups under the Equality Act 2010 in England, Wales and Scotland.

Even with this degree of legal protection, findings from a study carried out by the Traveller Movement (2017) identified 91% of GRT experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity and 77% had been victims of hate speech or a hate crime. Evidence in relation to other BAME communities (given that to date no substantive research exists into the mental health impacts of racism on GTR populations) has found that exposure to two or more racially motivated incidents of discrimination or racial abuse result in 8.35 percentage points reduction in mental wellbeing when compared with respondents who had not had such experiences (Wallace et al., 2016). Findings from various studies indicate that members of the GTR communities feel unsupported by mainstream services and had limited knowledge of where and how to seek advice or culturally competent mental health care. This can be exacerbated by poor access to IT services.

Half of all mental health problems are identified by the age of fourteen, rising to 75% by the age of twenty-four. Currently one in four adults and one in ten children in the UK have diagnosable mental health problems. These risks are exacerbated by a range of social risk factors including poverty, unemployment, lower educational attainment, insecure or poor quality accommodation and extreme stress (PHE, 2019), highlighting that, as with many other aspects of their lives, GTR communities are as a population more vulnerable to mental ill health and accordingly the higher suicide risk associated with mental illness.

Project

This pilot study, undertaken between December 2019 and July 2020 set out to establish a preliminary evidence base for the significant anecdotal evidence that highlights the ‘ripple effect’ of experiencing hate crime on mental health, suicide and para-suicide.

The project had the following objectives:

- To undertake a scoping exercise to identify incidences (and repeat incidents) of hate crimes across the UK experienced by GTR communities.
- To explore if (in the subjective opinion of respondents) there is an association between hate crime, poor mental health and incidents of suicide and para-suicide amongst GTR community members.
- To identify early experiences of hate crime (bullying and discrimination in educational environments considering the impact on the mental health of children and young people subject to racist bullying.

Incidences of hate crimes

Gypsies and Travellers have been identified in the literature as the number one targets of online hate speech in the UK accounting for 15% of racist or discriminatory slurs overall. In part, this fairly widespread failure by members of the public to identify and challenge hate speech or offensive language uttered against the GTR population may be because there is limited awareness that many GTR communities are protected under the Equalities Act as ethnic minorities. Typically, instead, the populations are frequently presented as having selectively adopted a ‘problematic’ lifestyle often conflated with the negative tropes of criminality.

The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry into inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers (2019:51) recorded 420 hate incidents against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people were reported to the police between 2016–18, with 284 reports relating to incidents that occurred online. More recent

analysis of reports made to GATE Herts “Report Racism GRT” website identified 172 reports made through their web portal between April 2019 and February 2020 (Galloway/GATE Herts, 2020).

A major peak in cases submitted to the Report Racism GRT occurred following the broadcasting of the April 2020 Dispatches programme “The Truth About Traveller Crime”, accounting for 45 reports in that month alone. In total between February and May 2020, 92 additional cases of hate crime/hate speech were reported to the Report Racism GTR website.

Low literacy levels, digital exclusion, distrust of authorities and a stoic attitude to victimisation may act as a barrier to reporting hate incidents, hence the critical importance of trusted third-party, culturally accessible processes for ensuring monitoring and reporting of such incidents. Even where reports are made to the police in relation to racist language, hate crime or threats,

evidence was presented that there is often a low level of response to such complaints from authorities or significant delays in taking action, supporting the view expressed overwhelmingly by our survey respondents and supported by interview findings, that there is little likelihood of complaints being taken seriously by the police.

This sense of hopelessness and belief that institutional racism means that complaints to the police will not be taken seriously when reported, both appears to add to the mistrust of police and authorities, and has been implicated in a sense of depression and disbelief in the possibility of achieving redress for hate crimes.

Findings

Experiences of hate crime

When asked how commonly hate speech or hate crime experienced by GTR community members occurs, 78% of our survey respondents suggest that incidents of hate speech/crime happen very often (with some comments suggesting this took place on a constant or daily basis); 18% selected ‘often’ and only 3% of respondents indicated ‘sometimes’.

Most common forms of hate speech/crime the survey participants experienced:

- exclusion and discrimination from and within services (e.g. health, education) experienced by 94% of respondents
- reinforcement of negative stereotypes experienced by 89% of respondents

Indeed, the findings from the survey and interview data appear to fully bear out the position posited by communities who believe themselves to be over-policed yet under-protected; and who consider themselves to be subject to limited protection from hate speech and hate crime despite the increase in political rhetoric (and support for) programmes aimed at engaging with minority groups identified as under-reporting increasing levels of hate crime, discrimination and racism to which their communities are subject.

- social media abuse experienced by 87% of respondents
- media incitement to racial hatred experienced by 82% of respondents

Also, notably and extremely concerning, given that bullying in school is associated with poor outcomes and adverse childhood experiences, is the finding that 78% of respondents highlighted school bullying as significant hate related incidents experienced by themselves and/or their children, demonstrating how early in life victimisation through hate incidents begins.

Reporting hate crimes/incidents to authorities

Despite the substantial number and regularity of hate speech/incidents experienced by GTR community respondents, the level of reporting remains very low, in common with evidence from other research studies. By far the most common response (at 81.6% of answers), suggested that respondents would simply feel that experiences of hate crime or hate speech was something experienced routinely and had to be put up with; whilst a slightly smaller number of respondents (75.9%) said that they would speak to family and friends about the incident but not take further action.

As a result of the toxic combination of ‘normalisation’ of hate incidents and a lack of trust in the police and other authorities, often including

schools, to take any action on complaints of hate crime/speech, **only 10% of survey respondents indicated that they would formally report hate crime and hate speech incidents.**

77% of our survey respondents indicated that the commonality of their experience represented another reason for not reporting hate crimes or hate speech, whilst between 38% and 35% of respondents (varying by ethnic group) noted that they **neither knew how to make such a report, or felt that it would be too much bother** – suggestive of respondents reflecting on incidents which they believed to be relatively minor and commonplace, such as experiences of hate speech etc.

Media influences and impacts

There is a complex and often toxic interplay between mainstream media, social media and the attitudes of and behaviours by staff within statutory authorities and services. There was a general agreement that service providers’ exposure to racist stereotypes feeds into and enhances further the risk of institutional racism. Similarly, respondents repeatedly and clearly emphasised the role of the media and indeed

politicians in creating spikes in hate speech and hate crime.

Survey respondents, focus group and interview participants all reported upticks in incidents of hate speech and hate crime following programmes such as My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding, Gypsies on Benefits and Proud, and the more recent Channel 4 Dispatches programme “The Truth About Traveller Crime”.

■ ***There’s no smoke without fire, so I think a lot of people, once they see even the hint of an allegation, they think there must be, like XX said, some sort of truth behind it. The more powerful and the more authoritative the person speaking, the more it legitimises the hate crime that follows it*** ■

Social media responses to broadcast programmes

Respondents noted that in the wake of stereotypical or negative broadcasting, social media such as Twitter is often operationalised to recycle negative tropes and abusive language towards GTR communities. It was noted that this can lead to greatly increased pressures on individuals, which in turn can cause significant mental health damage as ‘Twitter mobs’ can attack or ‘target’ someone for perhaps entering into a debate or seeking to challenge hostile language or negative perceptions aimed at their community.

Broadcast and print media use very specific non-verbal imagery used to create bias or influence tone of communication. It was

suggested by participants that the creation of such tropes then act as a visual ‘nudge’ to people viewing or reading about GTR communities, further feeding into the negative perceptions.

Other comments received highlighted the intergenerational and long-term impact of negative media representations of their communities and also damage to relationships with neighbours, peers and colleagues, suggesting cross-generational impacts of hostile reporting, exacerbated by ubiquitous social media amplification, which people were are unable to ‘get away from’.

Educational experiences

Feelings of exclusion, not belonging and ‘othering’ begin for GTR community members in childhood, particularly in school settings. Focus group and interview participants held strong views on the experiences of children in school, stressing the need for curriculum reform to include an embedded recognition of GTR history and cultural heritage to enhance a child’s pride in their ethnicity and to raise awareness amongst peers and teachers that GTR communities are BAME groups, protected by legislation and as such racism towards them is as unacceptable as towards other minority communities.

School bullying was highlighted by 78% of our survey respondents as one of the most common forms of hate speech/crime experiences. This was noted as an ongoing issue by participants of all ages and in particular all ethnic GTR communities, sadly demonstrating little intergenerational change and continuing discrimination within schools.

The inescapable fact is that hate incidents start in childhood, and in response GTR children may either be removed from school at a young age by their parents, or typically may seek to hide their ascription to prevent school bullying. Such responses (withdrawal, or ‘passing’) often becoming lifelong protective strategies. In the alternative ‘fighting’ (as young men in particular were noted to do) to obtain a measure of respect or to at least be ‘left alone’ by bullies were noted as common reactions, often leading to school exclusions or being labelled as a ‘trouble-maker’, which in turn could lead to contact with the criminal justice system and the beginning of a downward spiral for the young person in question.

Mental health wellbeing and exclusion

Participants in this study have repeatedly stressed the persistent grinding and demoralising effect of hate crime/hate speech and discriminatory representations of their communities on their lives. Accordingly, we argue that our data further reinforces previous evidence for other populations, that being a victim of hate crime has a greater impact on the emotional wellbeing of victims than non-hate crimes, with potentially devastating effects which may be linked to and exacerbate the risk of suicide.

To this end, we would argue strongly that our findings add a highly nuanced and persuasive layer of evidence to the suggestion both that Gypsies and Travellers are more likely than not to be over-represented in figures for those taking their own lives, and also that hate speech/hate crime are an exacerbating factor precipitating suicide in these populations.

Reported suicide (and attempted suicide) rates

In total, at the most modest calculation based on the evidence provided, we estimate **attempted suicides known to NGO workers and support staff to account for 131 suicide attempts over a five-year period** by members of GTR communities.

Whilst it is not possible based on the data we have gathered to clearly establish causation between experiences of hate crime/speech and suicide or para-suicide, as noted, a considerable number of respondents have stressed the corrosive effect on mental health and well-being of being subject to hate speech and discrimination.

Thus, with the caveat on implying direct causation

We argue, that based on Irish literature on Traveller suicide rates, broader research presented in this report, and the consistent statements made by participants, that there is a highly presumptive correlation between the experiences of exclusion, discrimination, being a victim of hate crime or hate speech and poor mental health and suicide amongst GTR populations. Concerningly, community members who have attempted suicide or who are suffering from mental health conditions are reported to have often avoided seeking help because of stigma, fear of discrimination or mistrust of 'mainstream services'. Social exclusion, poverty, experiences of racism, bereavement/grief related suicide, untreated mental health issues and substance misuse (all pertinent to communities experiencing extreme marginalisation) were also explicitly identified by participants as linked to high rates of Traveller self-harm, attempted and successful suicide.

but seeking to establish a sense of whether there may be a relationship between victimisation and depression/mental health issues and suicide or para-suicide, we asked respondents whether or not they were directly aware of an individual who committed suicide, or who attempted suicide having experienced hate speech/hate crime which may have impacted their mental health. Of the 25 respondents working for NGOs who answered this question, the majority of respondents indicated that over 50% of such clients had experienced hate crime or hate speech, with the largest number of respondents indicating that in excess of 90% of their clients who had committed suicide or attempted suicide had such experiences.

The 25 respondents who have lost relatives to suicide cited **62 examples of family members who had died by taking their own lives over a five-year period**. The largest number of respondents to this question had experienced multiple bereavements (2–5 family members) by suicide. These responses were most commonly found amongst Irish Traveller and Romani Gypsy respondents (largest categories of respondents by ethnicity in the survey).

It is also worth stressing that a deeply concerning number of young people between the ages of 18 and 30 have been directly impacted by suicide, with 13/20 (65%) of all young people responding to the survey who are in this age range reporting suicide within their families.

The impacts of exposure to multiple suicides at such a young age are likely to be profound and life-long, exacerbating risk factors for suicide amongst younger GTR populations, which are already higher for those who have experienced the death by suicide of a close relative.

In total, 20% of all respondents bereaved by suicide were under the age of 30.

Of those respondents who reported a suicide in their immediate family, 28% reported that the deceased person had directly spoken about their experiences of exclusion and hate speech/crime prior to their suicide. Of this sub-sample, 71% reported that they felt the individuals' low mood may have been impacted by these experiences, citing direct statements from the deceased person which led them to think that there was a connection between the hate crime/speech or discrimination and the person's mental health status/suicide:

"Because before he died he said that there is no life for an uneducated Traveller man other than to be hated upon."

When asked if relatives/clients who had committed suicide had been in contact with their GPs or specialist mental health services, only a very small number of community members and NGO support staff indicated that the person/people were in receipt of such support.

100% of Welsh Gypsies; 82% of Irish Travellers, 80% of Scottish Travellers and 32% of Romani Gypsies respondents reported having relatives who had attempted suicide in the previous five years.

In 60% of cases where respondents reported having family members who attempted suicide, before the event the individual had spoken about experiences of hate speech and hate crime.

Conclusions

Our findings evidence the interplay between broadcast and print media and what appears to be at times a cynical (or at least dispassionate) practice amongst many media outlets of recycling stereotypical (typically negative) tropes and rescreening 'popular' programmes to boost ratings in the wake of political discourse or negative publicity pertaining to Gypsy and Traveller communities. Respondents to the study provided abundant examples of the detrimental effects of such programming, or use of 'coded' negative language and images in print media and how this intersects with waves of hate speech across social media platforms. Politicians are also at times implicated in such behaviours and respondents were clear on the need for political and community leaders to take responsibility for, and an ethical approach to, labelling and demonising their communities.

The overall rate of suicide and attempted suicide across Romani Gypsy and Traveller population evidenced by our respondents, we argue, equates to a public health crisis impacting an already excluded group of minority ethnic communities. This epidemic of needless deaths, which we have found particularly impacts the lives of young people who have often experienced suicide amongst their immediate family by the time they are aged 30, requires urgent intervention to halt the lifelong impacts of such bereavements which are both devastating on a personal basis, and we suggest equate to profound cultural and community trauma.

We are profoundly troubled by the evidence repeatedly presented by participants pertaining to the impacts of institutional racism on the diverse communities, from barriers to accessing health care, to poor relationships with police services and lack of response to reporting of racial hatred and discrimination, as well as inter-generational cycles of bullying within schools.

In total, the data presented, and persistence of particular narratives, is clearly associated by many respondents, both NGO staff and community members, with a sense of mistrust of the authorities charged with supporting victims of crime, hate speech and discrimination, and also for many, a withdrawal into their own communities, and increasing rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.

It is clear that at the most fundamental level there is a requirement for mechanisms to support inclusion and bring about equality and enhanced outcomes for the GTR populations. There is also an urgent need to ensure that Boaters/Bargees and Showmen are protected from hate crimes and hate speech, and that Roma populations do not become 'left behind' in any interventions designed to mitigate the appalling outcomes identified within this study.

Whilst in some ways the lack of visibility of GTR communities as BAME populations may act (at times) as a protective factor to seek to avoid bullying, discrimination, and structural racism, this is not always a successful tactic, particularly impossible for 'roadside' Travellers and where communities are easily identifiable by residence, name, or through long-standing connections to a locality. Living with a dual identity with hope of becoming invisible within wider society results in strong feelings of 'othering', and is in effect a form of psychological and structural violence, which can lead to a person feeling that they don't belong to either GTR or settled communities. One respondent graphically described this experience as requiring 'a dual personality', a comment mirroring statements by many other participants who emphasised how they felt required to hide their ethnic identities to avoid overt racism or hate speech.

Recommendations

Policy and practice enactments

To enact the recommendations of the Women and Equalities Committee report (2019) in full in relation to social inclusion of GTR communities. Particular attention to be paid to the Committee's recommendations on education, hate crime, and health. To engage robustly through local and national mechanisms and engagement with public and professional bodies, so as to ensure that all statutory services and public authorities are familiar with both the extent of racism, exclusion and discrimination experienced by GTR populations – including also Showmen, New Travellers and Boaters – and their statutory duties in the case of communities included within the Equality Act.

To ensure that there is a publicly articulated expectation by sector leads and Government spokespersons that racism, bullying and discrimination in school, further and higher educational and employment settings, are treated as robustly as would be other forms of racism. To ensure that Gypsy, Traveller and Roma populations are meaningfully included in anti-discrimination training, including in relation to unconscious bias, delivered

Recommendations pertaining to mental health/wellbeing

To urgently include Gypsies, Travellers and Roma within the NHS Data Dictionary as has been urged repeatedly over many years, so as to establish a baseline pertaining to GTR physical and mental health and contacts with mental health professionals.

in professional and practice settings. That issues of intersectionality impacting GTR communities, e.g. gender, sexual orientation, disability status, age, caring responsibilities including marital status, etc and also the cultural diversity of GTR communities are taken into account by all statutory bodies and professional services when designing and delivering services.

To encourage the delivery of specialist training within university and professional curricula pertaining to GTR communities – delivered through community partnerships – for example, via the "Practitioner Programme" hosted by GATE Herts and similar programmes delivered by agencies such as The Traveller Movement and Friends, Families and Travellers - who deliver specialist cultural competence training to social work, education and health students as well as Post Qualification training offering CPD points. To request that consideration is made to record the ethnicity of deceased persons within General Registry Office data, and that (in the interim and initially on a trial basis to facilitate research) Coroners record the ethnicity of a person deceased by suicide where they are a member of the GTR communities.

To ensure that GTR communities are routinely included in local and national Suicide Prevention Plans.

For the additional risk factors and exacerbated risk of suicide experienced by GTR communities to be incorporated into health professionals' training (see above in relation to generic cultural competence training on GTR communities).

For MHCLG/Department of Health to commission an in-depth study to identify the prevalence and causative factors of suicide amongst GTR communities, and how these can best be addressed. It is recommended that this should take place in partnership with Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish agencies to enable consideration of variables within the four Nations.

An overarching Gypsy, Traveller and Roma health strategy incorporating physical and mental health should be developed, which includes appropriate funding to engage with service accessibility (including tailored in-reach relating to bereavement support and mental health provision) and monitors data on contacts and outcomes with services, as well as trialling appropriate interventions to support wellbeing.

Recommendations pertaining to policing/hate crime reporting

To ensure that police services throughout the country are monitored in relation to policing of and dealing with crimes against GTR communities, including in relation to internal training, arrest and charging decisions pertaining to hate speech/crime.

To continue to fund and support third-party reporting mechanisms and agencies working to assist GTR, Showman and Boater communities who have experienced hate speech/crime or discrimination.

For the MoJ to review CPS data on decision making, disposals and outcomes pertaining to individuals who are reported for hate offences against GTR communities.

For local health commissioners to engage and work in partnership with GTR mental health professionals, support organisations, Public Health authorities. Public Health England and other key agencies to fund, develop and deliver positive mental health awareness and suicide prevention campaigns aimed explicitly at Gypsy, Traveller, Roma and Showmen communities.

To identify and urgently seek to upskill GTR community members to train as mental health first aiders and mental health professionals (e.g. counsellors, psychologists, etc.) utilising local health commissioning powers/ resources, and encouraging the development of targeted bursaries and grants from universities, professional bodies and charities to support such training opportunities.

Public awareness campaigns

To ensure that there is greater awareness of the extent and illegality of hate speech against GTR communities. That public campaigns, backed up by prosecutions and/or restorative justice disposals are highlighted so that members of the public and professionals are alert to the fact that GTR populations are minority ethnic groups and that negative discourse or hate speech is as unacceptable as when utilised against other BAME populations.

To enhance awareness amongst GTR communities (particularly in the light of our findings, Irish Travellers, older GTR community members and those most at risk of digital exclusion) of the availability of third-party reporting mechanisms and the availability of assistance in relation to reporting experiences of hate, through

Social Changemakers, NGOs etc.

For media representatives, politicians and community figures to be reminded of expectations of respectful discourse, and standards in public office when commenting on any matters to do with GTR communities.

Education

To ensure that all schools are aware of and recognise GTR culture, through incorporation of GRT History Month within the school calendar, and information on the communities is incorporated into the national curricula.

That schools are monitored robustly in relation to reports of bullying, exclusions and also good practice, pertaining to the support of GTR students.

Community-facing activities

That funding is made available to NGOs and specialist agencies to provide support, and enhance training and employment of GTR community members working in partnership with public sector bodies so as to act as 'community advocates' and cultural 'bridges'.

That there is a sustained effort to develop networks of solidarity between GRT and other BAME and anti-racist organisations to develop understanding of the racisms and exclusions faced by GRT communities so as to enhance solidarity, understanding and partnership working cross culturally between diverse BAME and GRT populations.

That GTR cultures, and in particular the risk of racist bullying of pupils, are routinely incorporated into teacher training programmes.

That an enhanced emphasis is embedded into the work of GTR community groups and NGOs in relation to shared exclusions, knowledge exchange and internationalisation of activities with Roma and other Aboriginal/First Nation and BAME communities and activists (for example Black Lives Matter movements) elsewhere in the world.

We would emphasise that by definition, given the content of this study, the report contains racialised, discriminatory language and screen shot examples of offensive language in a number of places. It is advised that if distress may be caused by viewing or reading these examples, or indeed may result from the discussion on self-harm and suicide, that caution is exercised by the reader. In particular the content may in places not be suitable for children and some young people, or those who are particularly vulnerable to emotional distress occasioned by the themes of the study.

Introduction

- ***Derogatory terms are often so engrained people fail to hear it. From a local level to a national level from the word ‘Gypo’ being used to describe something that is dirty by another school child, to politicians in parliament using language to divide Gypsy and Traveller communities from ‘law abiding citizens’, to the media positioning us as invaders, swarms and using other military-like terms to dehumanise us*** ◀

Romani, female, aged 21–30 years, survey respondent

Hate crime against Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) communities is described as almost a daily occurrence, “as regular as rain” as one of our respondents eloquently described their experience of witnessing or experiencing the phenomenon.

This pilot research aims to establish an evidence base for the significant anecdotal evidence that highlights the ‘ripple effect’ of experiencing hate crime on mental health. It has been suggested that repeated exposure to hate crime may be implicated in high incidences of suicide (or para-suicide) within Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) communities¹.

¹ Although as a result of the absence of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in the NHS data dictionary, it is impossible to track contacts with mental health services or completed or attempted suicide rates for these populations. This is complicated further by the fact that coroner’s inquests do not record the ethnicity of those who commit suicide; however, there is abundant anecdotal evidence that suggests members of the Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller population in particular (little is known about Roma, Showmen or Boater para-suicide rates) are disproportionately over-represented in suicide statistics in the UK (Cemlyn et al., 2009; Van Cleemput, 2004). Comparable Irish data has found that Irish Travellers are disproportionately over-represented in suicide statistics at between 4 and 6.6 times the national rate of male suicide, depending on source and date when data was collated (All Ireland Traveller Health Study Team, 2010; Walker, 2008).

Hate crime is defined as:

- ***Any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic... Race hate crime can include any group defined by race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, including countries within the UK, and Gypsy or Irish Travellers*** ◀

Home Office, 2018

The fact that Gypsies and Travellers are specifically identified within the definition of race hate crime is perhaps indicative of the significant levels of hate crime incidents they experience. GTR individuals face everyday discrimination and hatred across all aspects of their lives, occurring in their engagement with public and private services and in their homes (James, 2020; Galloway/GATE Herts, 2020; Traveller Movement, 2016a). The level of public and policy concern pertaining to experiences of hate crime throughout the lifespan of GTR community members is indicated by the explicit recommendation on the need to gain further evidence and devise policy responses to such experiences, made in the report of the Government Women and Equality Committee report of 2019 (pp 64–65). A significant and increasing amount of hate speech is directed at GTR community members online (Galloway/GATE Herts, 2020), with threats of serious violence levelled against them on a daily basis. In particular, whilst undertaking this study (December 2019–July 2020) we have seen significant upticks in hate speech and as evidenced in this report, an increase in hate crimes (with associated impacts on wellbeing and mental health) committed against the populations. Such trends are often closely associated with publicity around high profile criminal cases, media reporting of unauthorised encampments or political discourse and

sensationalist television programmes (Galloway/GATE Herts, 2020; Traveller Movement, 2016b).

Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people have the worst outcomes of any ethnic group in Britain in relation to educational attainment, health and employment. They are also (for complex and under-researched reasons) disproportionately represented within the criminal justice system (Women and Equality Committee (WEC), 2019). What is noteworthy, however, is the extent and virulence of hate speech experienced by these populations in public arenas and the limited recognition of GTR populations as victims of such offences (James, 2020).

Unsurprisingly, the challenges the communities face across multiple domains have a significant impact on the population’s health and wellbeing. Rogers’s earlier research (2016) into the bereavement experiences of Gypsies and Travellers highlighted higher mortality rates and incidences of suicide within GTR communities than are found amongst the wider British population (supporting findings from other studies such as Parry et al., 2007; Cemlyn et al., 2009; Greenfields & Brindley, 2016). Crucially, Rogers identified significant anecdotal evidence of the impacts of bereavement on mental health, along with evidence that members of the community felt overwhelmingly unsupported by mainstream

services and had limited knowledge of where and how to seek advice or culturally competent mental health care. Walker (2008), writing on Traveller suicide in Ireland, suggests experiences of bereavement amongst close knit families is an additional facilitating risk for suicide. Given that there is abundant evidence of reduced life expectancy amongst GTR populations (Parry et al., 2007; Greenfields & Brindley, 2016, WEC, 2019), it is thus self-evident that loss of relatives and support networks through bereavement is likely to impact resilience when individuals are struggling with multiple life challenges, including experiences of racism, discrimination and victimisation through hate crime/speech. It is against this backdrop which the current pilot research is set.

This study is timely, given both the increasing evidence of rising rates of hate speech/crime impacting GTR populations (Galloway/GATE Herts, 2020) and a public health focus on growing incidences of mental ill health. Public Health England (PHE, 2019) suggested that half of all mental health problems are identified by the age of fourteen, rising to 75% by the age of twenty-four. Currently one in four adults and one in ten children in the UK have diagnosable mental health problems. These risks are exacerbated by a range of social risk factors, including poverty, unemployment, lower educational attainment, insecure or poor quality accommodation and extreme stress (PHE, 2019), highlighting that, as with many other aspects of their lives, GTR communities are more vulnerable to mental ill health, and accordingly the higher suicide risk associated with mental illness.

Research undertaken at Manchester University (Wallace et al., 2016) that explored the impacts of repeated incidents of racial discrimination and hate crime found that exposure to two or more

racially motivated incidents of discrimination or racial abuse result in 8.35 percentage points reduction in mental wellbeing when compared with respondents who had not had such experiences. GTR communities were not included in the Manchester project analysis as represented in such tiny numbers and not deliberately sought out, and as such the present study will add to evidence in relation to (self-reported) mental health and wellbeing and the impacts of discrimination and hate speech on the communities.

In the 2019 Cross-Government Suicide Prevention Workplan, the theme of ethnicity is largely silent and Gypsies and Travellers are not mentioned at all (Department of Health and Social Care, 2019). In the light of the anecdotal evidence referred to earlier suggesting excessive deaths by suicide, the unveiling of explanatory categories for family members' poor mental health and self-inflicted death that are proffered by GTR respondents and agency representatives in this study, it enables a deepening of the debate and contrasting data to be considered alongside the important Manchester findings. Indeed the invisibility of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in much debate about the impacts of racism, discrimination and inequalities in the UK – whether in relation to the considerable and overdue attention paid to the 2020 Spring and Summer Black Lives Matter protests and urgent reviews of BAME people's opportunities and experiences, or in relation to inclusion in public datasets and reports which highlight other minority communities, is noteworthy given the well-evidenced poor outcomes for these populations. Accordingly, we suggest that this small-scale study offers valuable evidence to be taken into account when planning for interventions and service delivery, as well as highlighting the hidden epidemic of hate experienced by members of the GTR communities.

Research aims and design

This pilot study, undertaken between December 2019 and July 2020 has inevitably been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting planned methodologies and access to participants in relation to some elements of the study.

The overarching aims of the project have however been met, in that the research set out to establish a preliminary evidence base for the significant anecdotal evidence that highlights the 'ripple effect' of experiencing hate crime on mental health, suicide and para-suicide.

Indeed, during the time-frame of the study, we were able to witness online and media reporting that linked criminality (the Dispatches programme of April 2020 and the conviction of three young GTR men for a particularly shocking manslaughter) and risk factors associated with the pandemic (the tabloid press reporting on Travellers attending funerals) with members of the GTR population behaviours. The reports indicated with remarkable clarity the association between 'uncleanliness' and 'disease/dirt', which a number of participants reflected upon when discussing how their communities are often represented in hate speech:

► ***We are the ultimate scapegoat, we belong to no social order. There is many factual misconceptions that we do not pay tax, that we don't encourage education, that we want all the benefits to society but none of the issues, that we are all thieves and do not wash regularly*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, male, aged 21–30 years

A point underlined further by headlines and reporting such as these from The Sun and the MailOnline:

► ***BUG ALERT Coronavirus: Craven Arms travellers say they've been 'treated like animals' but locals claim they are not isolating. Some 23 cases of the virus have been confirmed at a caravan site in the market town of Craven Arms, with health officials warning the number will continue to rise. The outbreak has been linked to a recent engagement party at the site*** ◀

North & Aoraha, 2020

► ***Travellers flout social distancing rules as crowds flock to gypsy² funeral where they spent four hours with the coffin despite warning that only 15 mourners could attend ceremony. Large crowds gathered to attend a gypsy funeral in Thornaby, North Yorkshire despite ongoing lockdown. Social distancing guidelines amid coronavirus meant only 15 people could attend the ceremony. However, a huge group of mourners turned up to the funeral to pay their respects to XX*** ◀

Ayles, 2020

As Facebook commentary from GTR community members indicated in response to this and similar articles, there was seen to be a particularly negative racialised tone to the articles which also indicated that reporters had looked at Facebook pages belonging to family members of the deceased and even phoned the funeral director for comment:

► ***How dare the dailyfail invade on people's personal space at such a private time, I believe that to that family they were paying attention to government guidance around large gatherings as the 40 people attending the funeral are presumably immediate family, ordinarily there would have been hundreds if not thousands at it, however they could have kept a greater distance between each other*** ◀

► ***I have huge concerns that a media outlet is invading a private moment of grief ... I understand the concern around the virus but still the media does like to invade our traditions and impose on our private times ... equally would the headline ever read country folk/ settled community ignore government advice? Nope, never seen any settled folk referred to by their choice of dwelling ... additionally the XX family are English Romany not Travellers*** ◀

Accordingly, the timing of this study has coincidentally allowed the researchers to identify particular patterns of media representation of the communities, which bear out clearly the comments made by respondents in relation to how they are perceived of by broad swathes of the public and media representatives. This is particularly pertinent, given that social and broadcast media (Khan, 2020), as well as academic commentators (Clarke, 2020) have highlighted in recent months the ways in some other (visible) BAME communities are singled out for opprobrium in relation to narratives that focus on criminality, culture and behaviours which are blamed for increasing health risks. As such, this research can also be utilised to bear comparison with how other BAME and minority

communities are represented in public discourse during this unprecedented period of time.

The Report Racism GRT hate crime project was funded by a grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government with the research study included within the set of agreed outputs. GATE Herts is a civil society organisation who manage Report Racism GRT, a hate incident reporting site and associated support service, which is run by and for Gypsy Traveller and Roma communities in the UK. The pilot study was commissioned by GATE Herts and undertaken by Margaret Greenfields and Carol Rogers from Buckinghamshire New University.

The research has the following objectives:

- To undertake a scoping exercise to identify incidences (and repeat incidents) of hate crimes across the UK experienced by GTR communities.
- To explore if (in the subjective opinion of respondents) there is an association between hate crime, poor mental health and incidents of suicide and para-suicide amongst GTR community members.
- To identify early experiences of hate crime (bullying and discrimination) in educational environments considering the impact on the mental health of children and young people subject to racist bullying.

² Best practice in reporting indicates that Gypsy and Traveller should have capitalised first letters as proper nouns given that both groups are recognised in law as ethnic minorities.

Methodology

The study consisted of diverse elements: a literature review and a light-touch analysis of social media themes and trends through the use of software analytics and manual review of a selection of Twitter, Facebook and media reports identified through standard search tools. This social media analysis element of the study took place relatively late in the research process and in the light of the high-profile Dispatches programme and findings pertaining to this, a focus group that explicitly explored the role of media in forming perceptions of the communities was convened.

For the empirical research (survey and interviews) a mixed-method approach was undertaken using a targeted survey comprising both quantitative and qualitative elements (with the initial intent of obtaining 100 responses, of which 88 were achieved, Table 1). This was aimed at respondents from England, Scotland and Wales who were representatives of community groups working with GTR, Showmen and Boater³ communities, and also self-selected community members from all of the populations who had personal or familial experience of hate crime and hate speech.

Further elements of the study as initially envisaged (and for which ethics clearance had been obtained in December 2019) consisted of a series of three focus groups, with selected categories of respondent as follows:

- One focus group using a purposive sample to identify suitable participants – with a sampling frame consisting of regional spread, role in organisations, community with whom they

work – with a target attendance of 8–10 participants drawn from case workers from across civil society organisations supporting Gypsies and Travellers who have experienced incidents of hate crime. For example, mental health support staff, legal/social justice employees, etc.

- The second focus group to consist of an inter-generational mix of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (people between the age ranges of 18–30, and 30–41 years) to provide a comparative view of frequency and changing nature of hate crime experiences over a number of years, e.g. capturing differences in experiences between hate crime targeted at road-side Travellers and hate speech in public settings most commonly discussed by middle aged and older people and the rise of online hate speech highlighted by younger generations.
- The third focus group of up to 8 members of youth groups (aged between 14–19 years) associated with the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with whom we are working (advisory panel membership and commissioning agency) to discuss experiences within secondary school and/or college settings. To explore experiences of ‘micro-aggressions’; incidents of friendship and protective strategies operationalised to protect against perceived or actual experiences of hate speech/crime and discrimination, as well as good practice they have encountered. Inclusion/exclusion criteria would have pertained – e.g. screened for vulnerability following

advice of NGO staff who have experience of working with the young people in question, gender mix and community heritage (e.g. G, T or R) as well as a range of ages.

An additional small number of individual interviews (up to 10 in total) were planned to take place with adult participants to include:

- GTR individuals who had experienced hate incidents and hate crimes – with the intention of accessing both those who had reported incidents to the police or taken legal action, and those who decided not to proceed to enable comparison of reasons for such decisions, and/or specialist experts, GTR support workers with mental health/counselling qualifications; educational experts etc.

In addition, two innovative story-based workshops were planned to take place with younger (primary school age) children between the ages of 9 and 11, from both GTR and non-GTR communities. These activities were to take place in classroom settings, to explore early experiences of friendship, bullying and discrimination and how this made children feel, as well as exploring issues of empathy towards children bullied because of their ‘otherness’. The workshops would have taken place within personal, social and health education (PSHE) classes, which focused on health and wellbeing, relationships and living in the wider world, and which accordingly provide a forum to explore issues of identity and belonging, and emotions. Parental permission was required in addition to head teacher and support staff engagement (identified through pre-existing educational contacts) and specialist resources, including texts from the well-known Romany author Richard O’Neill (widely used in schools with GTR pupils) were to form the

corner-stone of discussions and explorations of feelings/experiences. The inclusion of children and young people within the project would have been particularly pertinent given the impact of hate crimes (bullying and discrimination) on developmental outcomes, mental health and wellbeing and subsequently educational attainment. Adverse childhood experiences within which categories, exposure to bullying and racism are increasingly included (Lanier, 2020) are well recognised as having an impact on later life chances and thus are associated with increased risks of suicide (Brown, 2018).

Ultimately, the significant disruption to NGO and community activities and the ceasing of school-based education caused by the pandemic meant that the research activities had to be scaled back considerably. The school-based activities were not able to take place, although attempts were made (following on from amendments to the ethics approval in early April) for these to occur online with parents present. Similarly, we were unable to undertake a planned focus group with young people as agencies who had hoped to facilitate such engagement in the Spring were not continuing with their youth work in the same way as before lockdown, and a planned event where we had permission to hold a young persons’ discussion group was cancelled. Moreover, specialist GTR NGOs were in the main deeply engaged with and very overstretched by the need to react to COVID-19, public health and educational support needs of the communities with whom they work.

As a focus group had taken place with the GATE Herts Social Changemakers group, a network which consists of Gypsy and Traveller members of various ages, shortly before lock-down, we were however able to capture a range of experiences

³ We included opportunities for Showmen and Boater/Bargee populations to participate in this study in order to capture any pertinent experiences given that there is no known research that touches upon these non-ethnic GTR populations’ experiences. Some anecdotal evidence suggests that these groups may also be subject to discrimination and hate crime/speech. Accordingly, we have used the terminology of GTR populations in the widest possible inclusive sense – as discussed in the Women and Equality Committee report of 2019 and aligned to UK policy usage, which incorporates Showmen and Bargees/Boaters and New Travellers within discussion of GTR groups (Cromerty/UK Parliament, 2019).

from participants across the life-course, as well as being able to draw upon their knowledge of supporting community members who were experiencing hate speech.

A second small group interview with support staff from other agencies – non GTR background who work with GTR children and adults – was also convened, and a third group session occurred with participants of GTR backgrounds who had personal experience of hate crime/speech and/or who were working to support members of their communities in their roles as activists or employed by NGOs. This session took place in the wake of the Dispatches programme broadcast in April, with the theme of ‘media’ and hate speech/representation of GTR communities in online forums.

Although we were unable to undertake our own research with children and young people of school age, we have been fortunate enough to be able to access notes from the national NGO Friends Families and Travellers from their (as yet unpublished) project which discussed the experiences of young people in education and school based bullying. We are extremely grateful for their kindness in sharing key themes that arose from this work, and reflect upon these comments

Recruitment to the study/dissemination of survey instrument

The survey tool was drafted based on review of themes identified within the literature review of the reporting tool, and previous annual reports/evaluations of the GATE Herts ‘Report Racism’ programme or work, and following consultation with lead commissioner Josie O’Driscoll, CEO of GATE Herts.

as applicable elsewhere in this report, as well as drawing upon concepts and findings from the recently published (2020) Traveller Movement report on educational outcomes, exclusion and school experiences of GTR children.

In addition, a series of eight one-to-one interviews took place. Two of these interviews were carried out with (male) members of Romanian Roma communities on the telephone. Translation and notetaking was undertaken by a staff member at the Roma Support Group. The remaining six individual interviews (carried out by telephone or video call), all audio recorded and professionally transcribed, came from participants of Irish Traveller; Romany Gypsy; ‘mixed’ Traveller/non-GTR heritage and Boater communities. No Showmen or Scottish Travellers were interviewed despite our efforts to include their narratives in more detail, and indeed it proved difficult to arrange a number of interviews/focus groups with anyone other than those most actively working in community settings/as activists, given understandable concerns, preoccupations and caring responsibilities impacting many individuals whom we approached for interview. Topic guides and interview questions used in this study are available on request by contacting the authors.

After ethics approval was granted, participation information sheets (which also included details on where and how help and access to psychological and hate crime reporting services could be obtained should distress be caused by the sensitive questions asked) were disseminated along with the online link to the survey.

The researchers initially disseminated the survey instrument directly to named individuals in specialist NGOs in England, Scotland and Wales hosted by JISC Online Surveys. The survey included questions targeted at both NGO representatives and/or community members responding on a personal basis. NGO staff were also invited to share the link to the survey with respondents whom they were in contact with through their support roles. Considerable interest in the study became evident through social media discussions and a number of key NGOs and individuals also tweeted out the survey link to their followers encouraging participation, or shared the link via Facebook stories etc. The survey was open

between late December 2019 and late June 2020. Although responses were initially fairly rapid, as soon as the COVID-19 crisis began to occur and public concern arose even before lock-down (from late February–early March) there was an immediate and noticeable drop-off in engagement, as both NGOs and individual community members were understandably stretched in numerous directions or involved in caring responsibilities (individuals) or engaging with local, Governmental and health authorities (NGOs) in relation to rapid response activities that had to take priority. Accordingly, the survey was left open for an additional 4 weeks beyond that which was anticipated, with additional social media ‘pushes’ to encourage participation.

Respondents’/participants’ demographics

Despite the challenges, the survey received a strong response rate of 88% of the intended sample: 88/100 surveys were achieved.

Analysis of this data took place using the inbuilt tools incorporated into the JISC Online Survey platform that hosted the survey instrument.

Respondents were drawn from a cross-section of GTR, Bargees and Show People community members and included those working for NGOs supporting GTR populations.

Of the 88 respondents, 53 identified as female (60%); 15 as male (17%); 10 provided initials/gender neutral identification (11%) and 10 (11%) did not provide identifying information. Sexual orientation was not explicitly requested in this survey.

Overall, 20 respondents (22.7%) of respondents reported that they were both GTR community members and worked for a specialist NGO supporting GTR communities. Of these, 10 identified as Romany Gypsy, 6 as Irish Traveller and one each of Scottish Traveller, Boater/Bargee, Welsh Gypsy and Showman background.

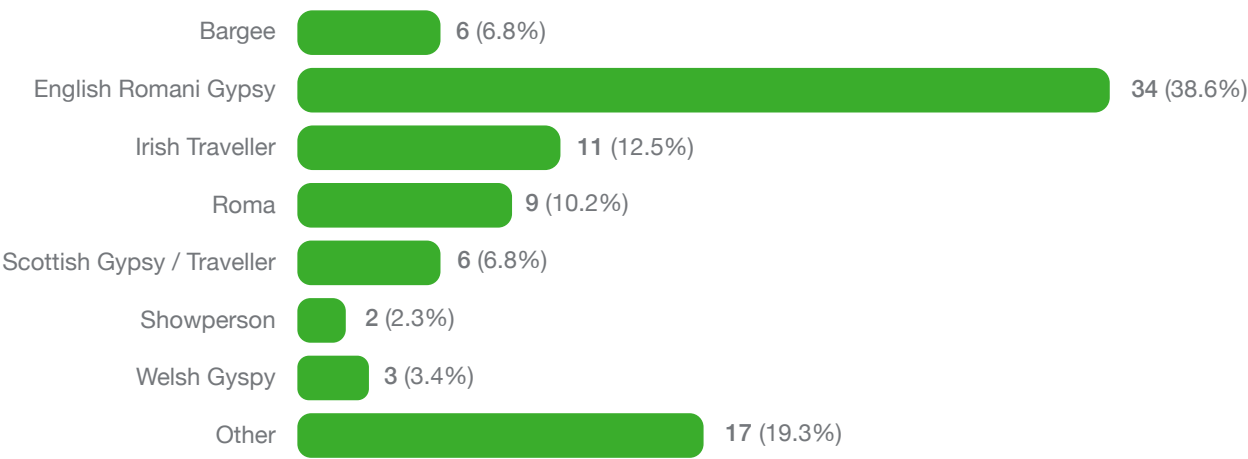
Those identifying as ‘other’ 17/88 responses (19.3%) included, English, Pavee, New Traveller [hence self-identifying rather than utilising pre-coded responses], Afro Caribbean (support worker), and mixed heritage participants identifying as having parents who were (for example) Irish Traveller and English (non-GTR) or Showman/Romani Gypsy; Irish Traveller/English Gypsy; Romany/English; New Traveller with a child who was half Irish Traveller etc.

Respondents were aged between 18 to over 60 years. Two respondents stated they were under the age of 20 (18 was the minimum age range for participation in the survey); seven were over the age of 60 and two individuals did not provide their age.

Figure 1. Age range of participants

Ethnicity	Age						No answer	Totals
	Under 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	Over 60		
Bargee	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	6
English Romani Gypsy	2	4	8	7	8	3	2	34
Irish Traveller	0	5	3	2	1	0	0	11
Roma	0	2	4	1	2	0	0	9
Scottish Gypsy / Traveller	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	6
Showperson	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Welsh Gypsy	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Other	0	1	2	4	6	4	0	17
No answer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	2	18	21	17	21	7	2	88

Figure 2. Ethnicity of participants



Role of participants

Twelve support workers/employees of NGOs (17.1%) said that they were not community members, 22.7% of respondents (20) were both community members and employed by NGOs, and 54.3 (38 respondents) identified as being community members only. A further 18 respondents (20.45%) did not reply to this question although cross-tabulations/analysis of this data

would suggest that a considerable number who did not explicitly self-identify as being of GTR Showman or Boater community were included in the community sub-sample – for example, those who responded as ‘other’ and were of mixed heritage or who described themselves in a way which indicated deep-rooted family connections with ethnic GTR communities, etc.

Figure 3. Disability status by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Do you have a disability?		No answer	Total
	Yes	No		
Bargee	0	6	0	6
English Romani Gypsy	11	22	1	34
Irish Traveller	1	10	0	11
Roma	3	6	0	9
Scottish Gypsy / Traveller	3	3	0	6
Showperson	1	1	0	2
Welsh Gypsy	0	3	0	3
Other	4	13	0	17
No answer	0	0	0	0
Totals	23	64	1	88

As can be seen, 23 (26.1%) of respondents self-identified as living with a disability. One hundred percent of Scottish Traveller and Showman respondents and 50% of Romani Gypsy respondents reported that they were disabled as opposed to 10% of Irish Travellers and no Welsh Gypsies or Boaters.

When analysed by age (Figure 4) it can be seen that 33.3% of respondents aged 31–40, 17.6% of those aged 41–50, and 61.5% of respondents aged 51–60 reported being disabled, as did 40% of those aged 60 and over.

Figure 4. Disability status by age

Age	Do you have a disability?		No answer	Total
	Yes	No		
Under 20	0	2	0	2
21-30	2	16	0	18
31-40	7	14	0	21
41-50	3	14	0	17
51-60	8	13	0	21
over 60	2	5	0	7
No answer	1	0	1	2

Of the 23 people who reported having a disability, 69.5% (16 respondents) provided more information. Of these, seven individuals had multiple disabilities, of which those respondents experiencing mental health challenges were most likely to report multiple mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, PTSD etc. Six respondents had both physical and mental health issues (e.g. COPD and depression); two reported having autism and one respondent reported having a learning disability.

Six respondents detailed mental health challenges ranging from severe mental health conditions, such as diagnosed bi-polar, personality disorders, and anxiety and depression (this latter condition reported by five respondents). Severe depression and PTSD were noted in two cases and ADHD in one case. Physical disabilities pertained to heart conditions; COPD in two cases; mobility

Participants in interviews and focus groups

Following on from the survey, purposive interviews and focus groups were undertaken. As detailed earlier, these were subject to some considerable challenges in obtaining participants given the time frame in which these were due to take place (at the height of the pandemic lockdown).

In a number of cases, multiple attempts were made to contact individuals either directly or through NGOs with whom they were in contact and who had passed on the survey link to the respondent. In the main, we were able to obtain participants for interviews/focus groups through our established networks of NGOs, meaning that a particular limitation of the study is the lack of in-depth interview data from (for example), roadside Travellers, whom it may be safely assumed have experienced considerable and multiple challenges both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic/lockdown. Further, some survey respondents who provided very detailed information about multiple bereavements and suicides could not be contacted, indicated that they were lacking in stable IT facilities to support a detailed interview (or were engaged in supporting family/children off school etc), or declined to be interviewed in more depth for other undefined reasons pertaining to their current circumstances.

conditions in two cases and traumatic brain injury in one case; arthritis impacting mobility in two cases and in another two cases (unrelated respondents, one Romanian Roma and one English Romany Gypsy) a hereditary connective tissues disorder causing severe pain and mobility problems were reported.

As stated, participants in interviews and focus groups were, in the main, linked to NGOs, some were in community groups, or resident in housing or at a well-established authorised site. It is worth noting that even in the case of respondents living in houses and on authorised sites, IT challenges also impacted participation in focus groups and interviews on occasion, such that it was not possible for everyone to take part in Zoom meetings. This led to reliance on mobile phone interviews, which could impact sound quality, or in some cases there were IT breakdowns during Zoom meetings where these were accessed via mobile phones, so that responses to some questions were sent in by text or relayed back by a focus group member piggy-backing from a server and leaving their phone ‘open’ so that another respondent could listen on a mobile phone and provide an answer to be fed back to the group.

These fundamental issues of digital exclusion and how this impacts respondents thus became of considerable importance during the study, and vividly illustrated comments made by some participants in relation to the difficulties they faced in accessing mental health support or reporting concerns in relation to discrimination or hate speech which they experienced personally or witnessed via social media etc.

Focus group and interview participants

The survey element of the study was followed by two focus groups and a small group interview. One of these consisted of participants working as hate crime support workers and social Changemakers for GATE Herts. The second focus group was intended to be with young people, but as noted, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented this being organised. An alternative focus group with community members and those working in NGOs was undertaken with a specific focus on influence and impact of the media on hate incidents,

following the Channel Four Dispatches programme and noticeable uptick in hostile social media commenting on the communities. A small group interview with two non-GTR support workers from a major charity – one of whom had considerable experience of working with Roma in East Europe – added depth to the findings. The focus groups were followed-up with eight in-depth interviews to gain detailed qualitative data pertaining to the lived experiences and impacts of incidents of hate crimes experienced by GTR people (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Focus group and interview participants

Focus groups and interviews	Participant background/gender	Age
Focus group one – Social Changemakers (Face-to-face meeting)	Romani Gypsy (Male)	31
	Romani Gypsy (Female)	25
	Romani Gypsy (Female)	47
	Romany Gypsy (Female)	47
	Romani Gypsy (Female)	51
	Romani Gypsy (Female)	72
	Irish Traveller (Female)	--
	Irish (non-GTR) hate crime support worker	58
Focus group two – media (Online)	English (non-GTR) hate crime and criminal justice advocate	26
	Roma support worker and advocate (Female)	30
	English hate crime and criminal justice advocate (non-GTR, Female)	26
	Irish hate crime support worker (non-GTR, Female)	58
	Romani Gypsy (Female)	47
	Romani Gypsy (Female)	47
	Romani Gypsy (Female)	43
	Irish Traveller (Female)	24
	Irish Traveller (Female)	--

Focus groups and interviews	Participant background/gender	Age
Group Meeting/Micro-focus group – support workers with NGO – working in areas of mental health/wellbeing, education and children’s issues (Online)	Non-GTR (Irish female, has worked in Romania with Roma and also in UK with Travellers/Romany Gypsies/New Travellers)	30s
	British (non-GTR), female	30s
Interview (Face to face)	Romani Gypsy (Female)	47
Interview (Telephone)	Romani Gypsy (Female)	47
Interview (Telephone)	Irish Traveller (Female)	43
Interview (Face to face)	Irish Traveller (Female)	24
Interview (Zoom)	White British Boater (Female)	48
Interview (Phone)	White British Female (dual heritage, Traveller father)	19
Interview (Phone)	Roma (male)	25
Interview (Phone)	Roma (male)	27

A thematic analysis of the data gathered during interviews and focus groups highlighted the following key themes which are interrogated in subsequent sections of this report (see Findings).

- Influence and impact of the media
- Negative media stereotyping
- Structural/institution racism – including experiences of policing
- Mental health, suicide, and suicide ideologies
- Identity/culture and gendered expectations
- School experiences/bullying

Ethical issues

Full ethics approval for this study was granted in late 2019 and subsequently amended in April 2020 after re-review by the ethics panel (as required by the authors’ university) to take account of the changing methodology occasioned by the inability to undertake face-to-face interviews/focus groups etc resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Ethics approval and examples of participant information sheets distributed are available at **Appendix A** of this report.

Given the nature of this study and the ability to potentially cause significant distress to participants who were asked to reflect on both experiences of hate crime/hate speech and suicide or self-harm; considerable attention was paid to ethical elements of this study (McCosker et al., 2001; Liamputtong, 2007). The professional ethics research code of the Social Policy Association⁴ (the professional association to which Greenfields belongs) was also utilised as a reference point when planning the study and trained psychologists on the university ethics panel reviewed the application in considerable detail, particularly in relation to the (subsequently unable to take place) elements pertaining to workshops with young children.

The following issues were highlighted in the ethics application:

- For focus groups/interviews participants: ethical concerns exist in relation to individuals who have personal characteristics placing them at risk (vulnerable as a result of poverty, prior experiences of hate crime, bereavement by suicide, depression etc.). This is relevant both for professional staff and also community members. Although a presumption may exist in relation to the resilience of professional staff, advice will be sought from advisory panel members and their

line managers in relation to issuing an invitation to participate in a focus group and information on sources of support will be made available to both professionals and community members.

- The research topic is sensitive given that it potentially addresses mental health and suicide. Both researchers are experienced in managing challenging and sensitive research topics. The wellbeing of participants is paramount and research activities will be stopped if any signs of distress is evident. Support mechanisms will be in place from local NGO organisations and both local and national mental health and bereavement support organisations. Screening out of vulnerable participants will occur with the support of NGOs with whom this project is devised – e.g. service users and young people participating in youth groups etc who will be well known to NGO staff.
- Ethical considerations relating to the participation of children recognise them as competent decision makers respecting and valuing the voice of the child. Whilst parental consent will be gained and the support of NGOs working with schools, school wellbeing teams and classroom teachers, children themselves will decide if they want to participate and their decision respected should they choose to withdraw at any point during the session. Follow-up checks on the child’s wellbeing will be agreed with school and parents should a child decide to withdraw from a workshop session anticipated to last for approximately 45 minutes to reduce ‘stress’ and tiredness in relation to primary school age children.
- Participants are at all times free to withdraw from the study. It will be made clear that participation is voluntary and that it is possible

to withdraw from the study up until two weeks after interview and that sight of the transcript of any interview is possible on request.

- Participation in the (anonymised) online survey will be taken as informed consent to proceed with analysis of the data. A link will be provided to enable the survey participant to access information on sources of advice/support and information on how to contact the research team members or to raise a complaint or concern pertaining to the study will be embedded into the online survey link.

In practice, some conversations were indeed disturbing and distressing (for both interviewers and interviewees) and care was taken to offer to stop the conversation and/or ‘check in’ on the

emotions of the interviewee regularly during the interview as well as to ensure that participants were aware of sources of support. The majority of participants were working in the field of delivering support around hate crime to community members. The participants frequently expressed that their own/family members’ experiences, and the lessons learnt from experiencing hate crime, were important to their role, and that they wanted to share their experiences, whether in a group context or individually. This sent a powerful message on the interplay between responsible care for participants and autonomy of interviewees as well as the therapeutic and powerful value to individuals and communities of ‘telling suppressed narratives’ of inequity, racism and injustice (Lysaght, 2009; Louise, 2016).

⁴ http://www.social-policy.org.uk/downloads/SPA_code_ethics_jan09.pdf

Literature review

The following brief section builds on the outline/background literature referred to in the introduction to this report.

Although it has been claimed that “the UK is acknowledged as one of the most diverse and tolerant countries with one of the strongest legislative frameworks against hate crime in the world” (Home Office, 2016, Chapter 3) and where “racism towards most ethnic minority groups is widely seen as unacceptable” (National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups et al., 2018, pp. 7–8), there remains a serious gap between policy and action for GTR communities as ‘antigypsyism’ remains overt and commonplace (WEC, 2019; National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups et al., 2018; The Traveller Movement, 2017).

Often referred to as the “last acceptable form of racism” (WEC, 2019; Traveller Movement, 2017), Gypsies, Travellers and Roma people continue to experience widespread prejudice and discrimination, so common that it is almost normalised and seen as a “fact of life” (WEC, 2019, Chapter 8). This is despite the fact that Romany Gypsies, Roma, Scottish Gypsies and Irish Travellers (although not Showmen, Boaters or New Travellers) are protected against discrimination as ethnic minority groups under the Equality Act 2010 in England, Wales and Scotland. Even with this degree of legal protection, findings from a study carried out by the Traveller Movement (2017) identified 91% of GTR experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity and 77% had been victims of hate speech or a hate crime. Similarly,

the Traveller Community National Survey for Ireland (2017) identifies that 77% of Travellers had experienced discrimination in the ‘past year’.

According to analysis undertaken by ‘Hatebase’,⁵ an online database that records hate speech and slurs used on Twitter, Gypsies and Travellers were identified as the number one targets of online hate speech in the UK (Shubber, 2014) accounting for 15% of racist or discriminatory slurs overall. (See ‘online media’ for examples of common use of racialised slurs against members of the GTR communities identified in 2020 metrics). In relation to print and broadcast media reporting, hostility and racial stereotyping towards GTR people are widely and routinely used by media outlets in a way that would not be tolerated if directed at any other ethnic minority group (Traveller Movement, 2016a; Willars, 2015; Baillie, 2019). Major concerns also exist (Traveller Movement, 2017; James, 2020; WEC, 2019; Cemlyn et al., 2009) over the hostile and negative attitudes, and rhetoric used by British politicians when referring to GTR communities, including most recently shown in the contributions of one MP broadcast in the controversial Dispatches programme of April 2020. The programme is subject of ongoing investigations by Ofcom⁶.

Giving evidence to the WEC in 2018, Josie O’Driscoll, CEO of GATE Herts, stated that through their third-party reporting of hate crime project, 420 hate incidents against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people were made between 2016–18, with 284 reports relating to incidents that occurred online (WEC, 2019, p. 51). The most recent analysis

and evaluation of reports made to GATE Herts “Report Racism GRT” website (Galloway/Gate Herts, 2020) identified 172 reports made through the web portal between April 2019 and February 2020, 140 cases had been fully addressed and 46 of these cases were ongoing at the time of writing. Ongoing cases typically involved wider service engagement, for example with police, newspapers, local authorities, victim support, etc. Forty-one cases were further reported to the True Vision website⁷ over this time frame. A major peak in cases submitted to the Report Racism GRT occurred following the broadcasting of the April 2020 Dispatches programme “The Truth About Traveller Crime”, accounting for 45 reports in that month alone. In total between February and May 2020, 92 additional cases of hate crime/hate speech were reported to the Report Racism GTR website. In addition, in 2019–20, GATE Herts Social Changemakers supported 526 community members in various locations across the UK in relation to taking action against hate crime and hate speech.

It is deeply concerning that the Galloway/GATE Herts (2020) report provides significant evidence that even where reports are made to the police in relation to racist language, hate crime or threats, there is often a low level of response to such complaints from authorities or significant delays in taking action, supporting the view expressed overwhelmingly by our survey respondents and supported by interview findings, that there is little likelihood of complaints being taken seriously by the police. This sense of hopelessness and belief

⁵ Hatebase – an analytical tool to identify prevalence of particular terms utilised in social media forums can be accessed here: <https://hatebase.org/about>

⁶ <https://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/news/2020/07/pressure-mounts-ch4-after-truth-about-traveller-crime-complaints-set-be-investigated> Report 1st July 2020 Travellers Times Online.

⁷ <https://www.report-it.org.uk/> Online hate crime reporting portal maintained by the police service in the UK allowing direct reporting of hate crime/hate speech offences to the police service.

that institutional racism means that complaints to the police will not be taken seriously when reported, both appears to add to the mistrust of police and authorities, and has been implicated in a sense of depression and disbelief in the possibility of achieving redress for hate crimes. James (2020) in an analysis of self-reported hate crime statistics drawn from a survey undertaken into the accommodation and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers, found that respondents had only reported 28% of the hate crimes they experienced, compared to a national average of 51% of reports made by victims of such crimes (Flatley, 2018). None of the Gypsies and Travellers in the Flatley analysis had reported to a third-party agency, although at the time those statistics were gathered, mechanisms for such reporting were at an early stage and the GATE Herts Social Changemakers programme had not been initiated. As noted earlier, in the last two years there has been a significant increase in reporting through the dedicated hate crime portal, Report Racism GRT, as a result of increased press coverage, word of mouth publicity and social media activity. Despite this enhanced use of the dedicated hate crime reporting site, analysis undertaken in May 2020 (Galloway/GATE Herts, 2020:4) indicated that 71% of those reporting hate crime/speech incidents believed there would be no action taken by the authorities if they reported directly to the police.

■ ***Hiding ethnicity: time is wasted hiding ethnicity, thinking about ethnicity, deciding how to ‘frame’ personal antidotes as not to ‘come out’ as GTR, not socialising in case you’re seen, stress from reading about hate crime, worrying for family that they will suffer hate crime, double checking doors are locked, hyper-vigilance watching passers-by ‘are they arsonists/going to hurt me’... Lack of self-confidence*** ■

Scottish Traveller woman, with depression and anxiety, age 31–40 years

Goldston (2002) defines hate speech as something that “stigmatizes its target by ascribing to it a set of constitutive qualities that are widely viewed as highly undesirable” arguing that prejudice towards the GTR population is so casual and subtle that it eventually becomes normalised in society. Taken to the extreme, normalisation is achieved when the victim no longer questions a behaviour as inappropriate and starts to accept it, even in some cases leading to internalised racism or fear of discrimination to the point where they refuse to identify themselves as a part of the community (Csepeli & Simon, 2004). Indeed, these extreme reactions to lifelong racism were identified by some respondents to our survey, thus for example, James (2014, 2020) reflects on the interplay between the emphasis on policing of GTR communities who are typically seen as perpetrators of crime and the invisibility of the communities as victims of crime and how this results in ‘hidden harms’ (forthcoming, 2020). It is abundantly clear that GTR communities are not accurately represented in hate crime statistics (WEC, 2019; Traveller Movement, 2017; Galloway/GATE Herts 2020; Thompson & Woodger, 2020). Whilst in part under-reporting of hate crime and speech may be due to a culturally mandated stoic approach to life experiences, normalising adverse life events including prejudice and discrimination (Rogers, 2016), the WEC (2019) report also

suggested that low literacy levels (and as we have discovered whilst undertaking this research, digital exclusion) may act as a barrier to reporting hate incidents, hence the critical importance of trusted third-party, culturally accessible processes for ensuring monitoring and reporting of such incidents.

Richardson and O’Neill (2012) explore in detail how an interplay of media reporting, political discourses and social media fuel hate speech and shape negative concepts about GTR groups; noting that there is typically a ‘circular nature of anti-gypsy discourse’ (p. 169) inextricably linked to the ‘circular nature of anti-gypsy discourse’ (p. 185). Indeed, the failure to utilise sociological or psychological discussions of the impacts of disadvantage and exclusion and how these correlate to both risk factors and feed negative racialised discourse are explored by Quarmby and Townsend (2020) in an August 2020 article, in which it is noted by a senior member of the

National Police Chief’s Council that “there seems to be a deep-seated and accepted prejudice that demonises people from the [GTR] community. You wouldn’t call any other ethnicity inherently criminal.”

The WEC (2019) report (Chapter 8) explored the complex and frequently toxic representation of GTR communities in public discourse, and the way in which s149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons with protected characteristics and those that do not share them. It noted that cultural stereotyping by public service providers, for example the police, often results in discriminatory behaviours towards GTR. In so doing, the WEC (2019, p. 48) noted:

Given the developing body of knowledge in relation to the negative psychological impacts of

■ ***We are linking Gypsy and Traveller ethnicity with problems in a way that we do not do with any other ethnic group. By doing that, we are negatively labelling Gypsies and Travellers*** ■

experiences of repeated racist incidents (Paradies et al., 2015; Brondolo et al., 2016; Wallace et al., 2016), or where racialised minorities experience events as procedurally or morally unjust (Nadal et al., 2017), it is perhaps unsurprising that such abundant evidence exists in relation to the poorer mental health of GTR community members in the UK (Parry et al., 2007; Greenfields & Brindley, 2016; Cemlyn et al., 2009), as well as high levels of reported mistrust of the police and often other public bodies (WEC, 2019; Cemlyn et al., 2009;

James, 2014). Indeed, the findings from the survey and interview data appear to fully bear out the position posited by James (2020), of communities who believe themselves to be over-policed yet under-protected. They consider themselves to be subject to limited protection from hate speech and hate crime despite the increase in political rhetoric (and support for) programmes aimed at engaging with minority groups identified as under-reporting the increasing levels of hate crime, discrimination and racism to which they are subject

(Home Office, 2016). Negative social media commentary and explicit hate speech aimed at members of the GTR communities is common, in the following section a brief analysis is presented of findings from a social media review undertaken in July 2020, before we then turn to the findings of our pilot study.

Social media analysis

Whilst ‘Hatebase’ has highlighted that certain deeply offensive terms used against GTR communities are the most common racialised hate speech phrases identified on Twitter, (e.g. ‘pikey’ and ‘Gyppo’), it is important to note that some findings contain more ‘neutral’ terms such

as ‘Traveller’, which will also by definition include metrics that incorporate non-racial groups such as holiday makers. Accordingly, care should be taken in use of these findings until or unless more sensitive and in-depth analysis can be undertaken, which is beyond the scope of this small pilot study.

Example of Hatebase search of Twitter utilising common derogatory phrasing associated with GTR communities:

Showing 1 - 4 of 4 results				Showing 1 - 4 of 4 results			
gyppo (variant of gyppo)	English	5,601 sightings (Recent)	Extremely offensive	piker (variant of pikey)	English	285 sightings (Recent)	Highly offensive
gypos (variant of gypos) (plural of gypo)	English	2 sightings	-	pikey	English	2,892 sightings (Recent)	Highly offensive
gypos (plural of gypo)	English	1,565 sightings (Recent)	-	pikeys (plural of pikey)	English	406 sightings (Recent)	-
gyppoes (variant of gypos) (plural of gyppo)	English	1 sighting	-	piky (variant of pikey)	English	-	Extremely offensive
				Are we missing a term? Add it now			

As discussed, peaks in hostile online reporting and use of linked negative terminology or phrasing are typically responsive to high profile incidents such as the manslaughter of a police officer (with the case culminating in July 2020 with the conviction of three Romani Gypsy young men from a single site; Quarmby & Townsend, 2020).

Let’s not be afraid to challenge Traveller culture

death shines a spotlight on lack of school and structure that leads some in these communities to a life of crime

Monday July 27 2020, 12:01am,

Traveller community protected
The killers of
they were untouchable, the detective who led the hunt for them has said.Detecti...

killers
had a lifestyle "based on criminality" and thought

Focusing on particular elements of reporting rather than also reporting on condemnation of the perpetrators from GTR community members who commented on Twitter on the case:



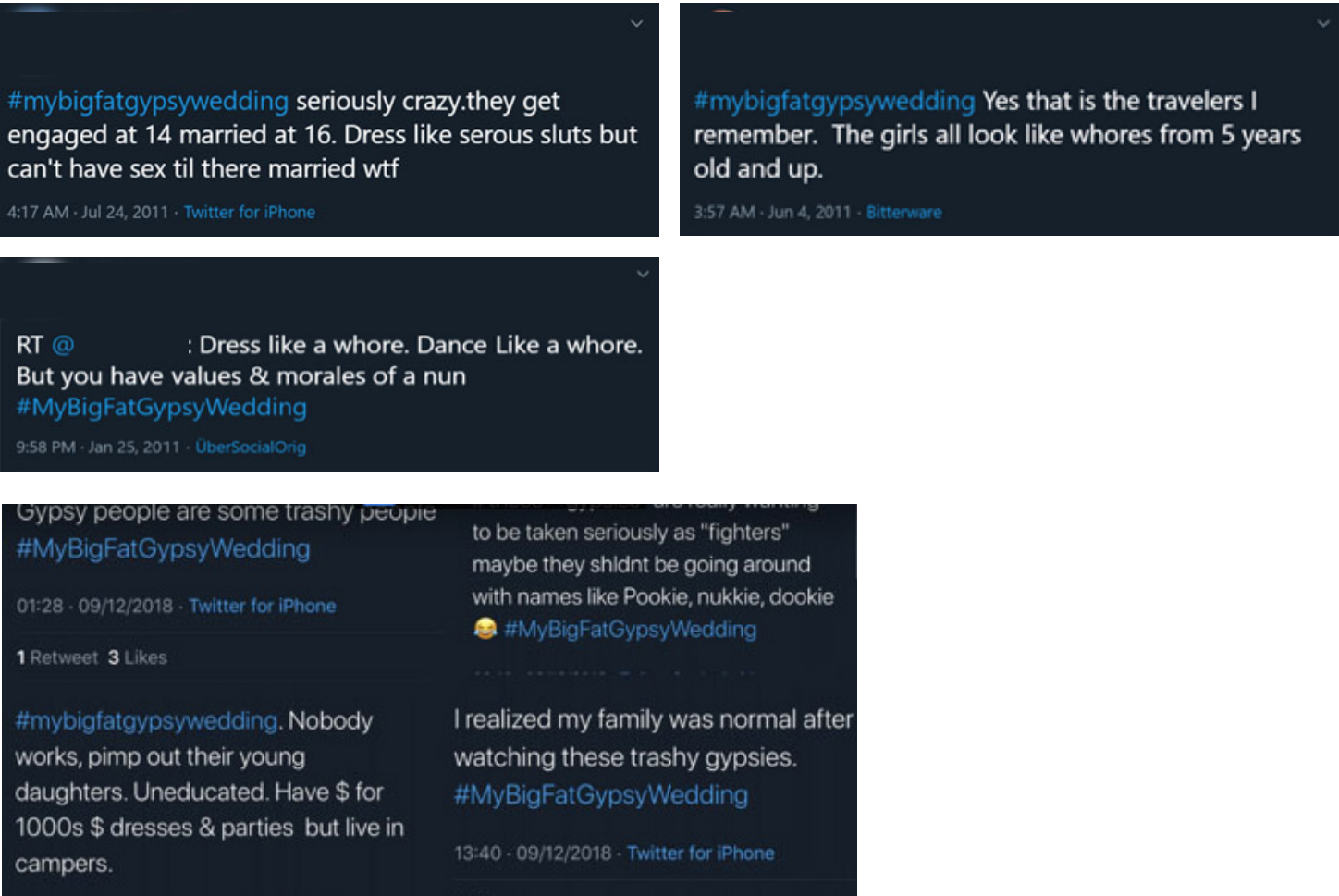
In other cases, some politicians can then be seen to amplify the rhetoric and respond to the prevailing media tone (Richardson & O’Neill, 2012; WEC, 2019), blaming an entire ethnic minority community for the actions of individual criminals, by commenting on the need to ‘clamp down’ on Gypsy/Traveller communities in response to a question on what they would prioritise if they were elected Prime Minister.

The Dispatches television programme of April 2020 that sought to link increased crime rates with the presence of Gypsy/Traveller sites in a locality, or reporting representations of ‘rule breaking’ pertaining to unauthorised encampments, or perceived breaches of coronavirus social distancing rules, which negatively impacts members of the wider public, also generated considerable Twitter/social media discourse, which typically recycled negative tropes (see discussion in relation to analysis of interviews/ survey data).



Voyeuristic or sensationalist broadcast programmes such as ‘My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding’ (Doherty, 2013), have also been proven to increase negative or stereotypical social media discourse, as well as being linked to an increase in bullying in schools – a theme which arose repeatedly in responses to the survey and in interviews. The show was the subject of a complaint dismissed by Ofcom – an outcome that further diminished confidence in the power of regulating authorities amongst many GTR community members.

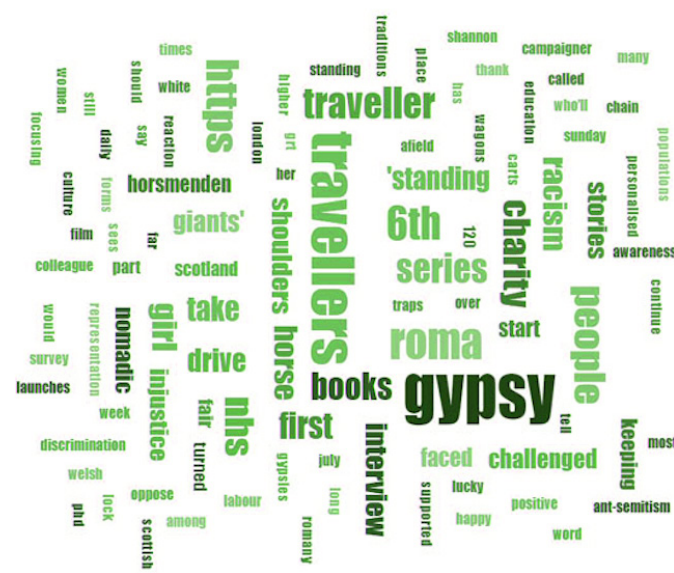
Examples of offensive, negative, sexualised social media discourse around “My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding”



The collage consists of nine distinct screenshots:

- Top Left:** A tweet replying to @, stating "Ireland is 82% settled Irish, 1% Irish traveller, and 10% non-Irish white. Idk if you're any good at math but that's 93% white. Get over yourself." It shows engagement metrics: 0 retweets, 0 stars, 356 replies, 387 likes, and 1 share.
- Top Middle:** A tweet replying to @, discussing a traveller's behavior: "Is she for real. Perhaps if traveller's stopped thieving, flytipping & murdering then people would be a bit more accommodating. But they won't so let them clear of back to Ireland. Oh I forgot the Irish don't want them either." Engagement: 0 retweets, 0 stars, 74 replies, 280 likes, 1 share.
- Top Right:** A tweet from Irish Literary Times (@IrishLitTimes) quoting John Boyne: "A Traveller at the Gates of Wisdom by John Boyne: Lively but long-winded sco.lt/7nVUOW". Engagement: 0 retweets, 0 stars, 18811 replies, 5778 likes, 18811 shares.
- Middle Left:** A screenshot of a video player showing a person riding a horse.
- Middle Center:** A tweet replying to @, starting with "And yes, obviously there are many other questions".
- Middle Right:** A tweet retweeted by @, featuring a photo of a person in a red vest leading a dark horse.
- Bottom Left:** A tweet replying to @, mentioning @guardian and discussing stereotypes about Irish Travellers and their treatment of animals. Engagement: 1 retweet, 13 stars, 5 replies, 2 likes, 14 shares.
- Bottom Center:** A tweet from Dictionary of Irish Biography (@), featuring a portrait of a woman. Engagement: 5 retweets, 35 stars, 888918 replies, 1149 likes, 888918 shares.
- Bottom Right:** A tweet from Labour GRT Campaign (@LabourGRT) discussing the role of women in the Traveller community. Engagement: 1 retweet, 1 star, 5 replies, 2 likes, 14 shares.

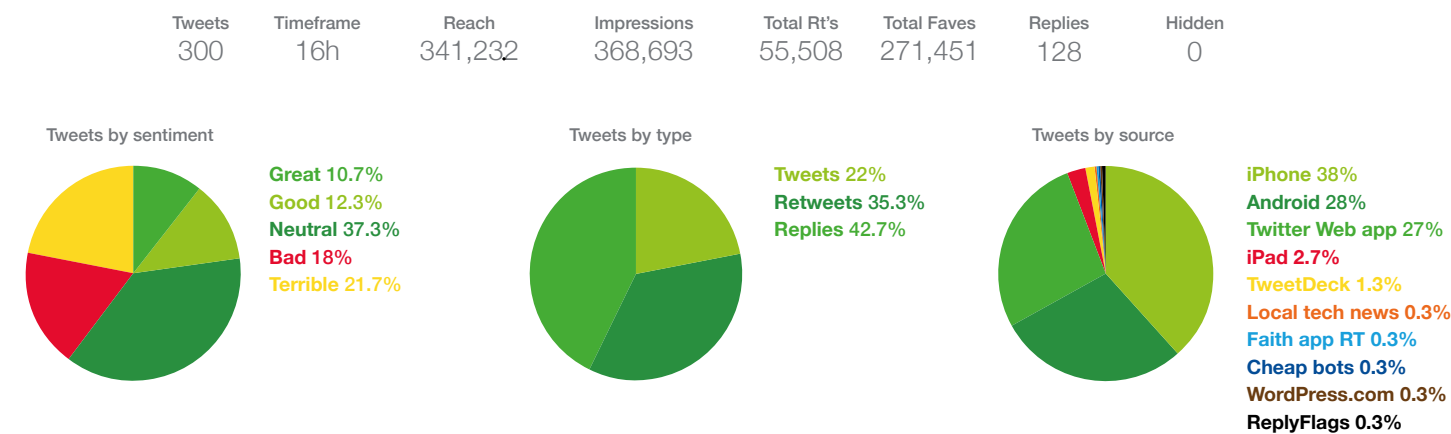
148 tweets were analysed, 60.8% positive, 21.6% neutral, 17.6% negative, overall positive



- Racism
- Roma
- Stories
- Books
- Horses
- Injustice
- Interview
- Challenged
- Charity
- GTR

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Word: Romani
300 tweets were analysed, 23% positive, 37.3% neutral, 39.7% negative. Overall negative

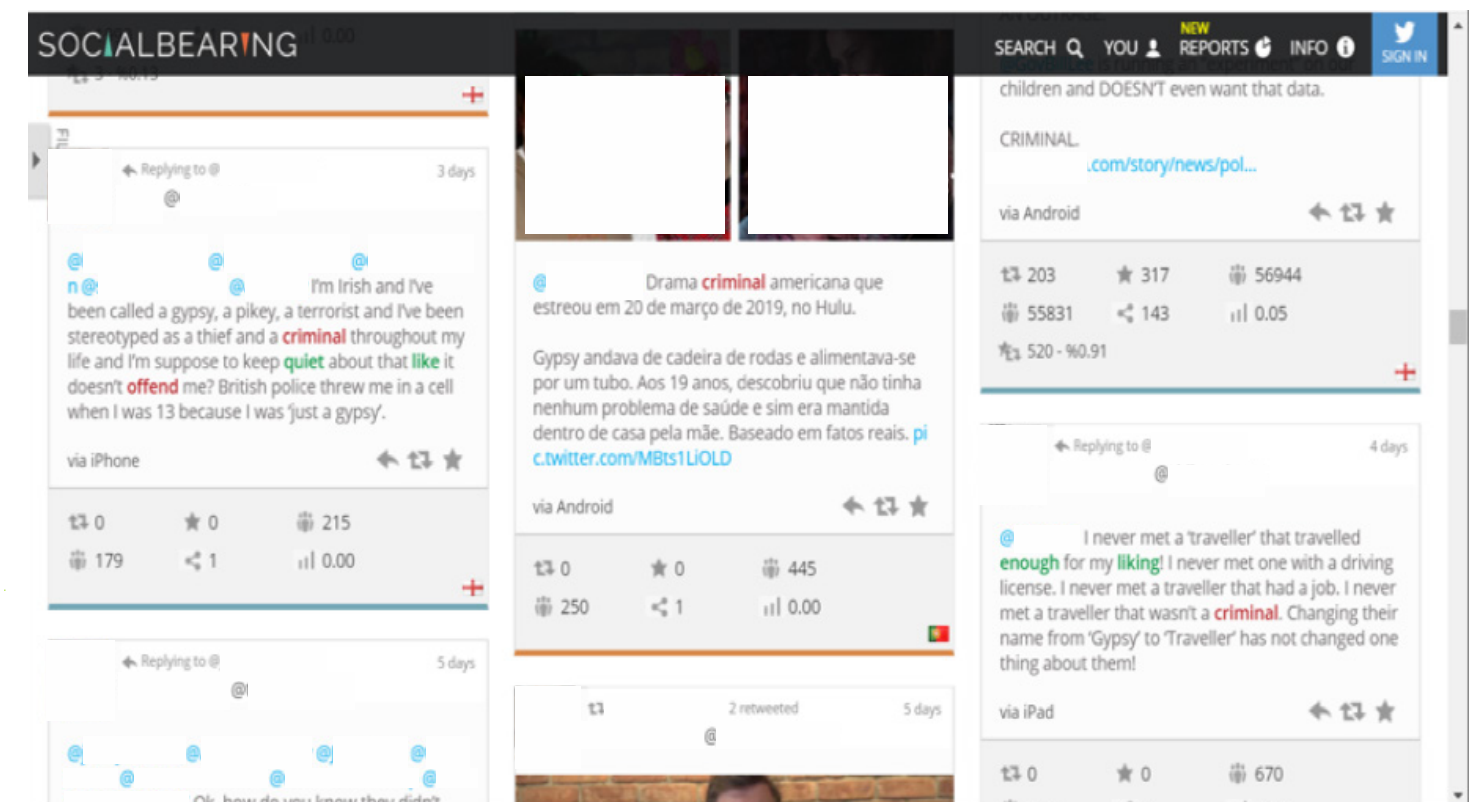


According to this word cloud, some of the most common words used alongside the term Romani on twitter are:

- Anti-Romani
- Jewish
- Hate
- Anti-Semitism
- Demolition
- Shit
- Evicted
- Racist
- Gypsy
- Municipal

Overall, this is a negative word cloud as majority of the words are associated with hate. The inclusion of terms such as anti-Semitism may be because of an association with shared persecution during the Nazi era but there is also inclusion of terms relating to eviction, dirt and local authorities (municipality)

Utilising terms such as Gypsy, Traveller, criminality and hate speech creates a more negative and yet also nuanced picture, where individuals report experiences of discrimination (for example being arrested), as well as racist terminology or suggestions that Travellers do not have driving licences and are all criminals.



Roma were largely captured within the search for 'Gypsy' as a term and re-view of search terms including Roma indicated a substantial number of references to football clubs or (in the immediate lead into the commemoration of Roma genocide memorial day – reference to the Nazi era and Holocaust). Re-running the exercise during a period when there is a more 'standard' pattern of commentary may well change the outcomes and illustrate a more nuanced or varied picture. The term Showman when treated to the same exercise

identified a high number of tweets and social media traffic in relation to show business, and Boaters pertained largely to 'leisure' boating rather than those communities living on the water as 'live-aboards'. As such, these categories of search term are not illustrated in this section of the report.

A 'top level search' for newspaper articles referring to GTR communities illustrated the following patterns:

‘Neutral’ articles (to some extent):

Kent police raise ‘Gipsy and Roma Traveller’ flag ‘to show their continued support for diverse communities’
(*Sales, 2020*)

Alfie Best, the Romany tycoon buying up gypsy sites, may be in for a bumpy ride
(*Collins, 2018*)

‘Negative’ articles:

Gypsies use 1,000 TONNES of rubble and 12 dumper trucks to build illegal camp in just three days after moving on to field in middle of night
(*Weston, 2020*)

Villages are held to ransom by the gypsy family from hell after their rampage in New Zealand: Deported travellers tell Worcestershire residents ‘buy our land for £600,000 or we’ll move in’
(*Mail on Sunday Reporter, 2019*)

COPS ‘TOO PC’ Police in crime hotspot blasted for flying Gypsy Roma flag from their HQ
(*Sullivan, 2020*)

Police raid Moses Gate Gypsy and traveller site
(*Chaudhari, 2020*)

‘Positive’ articles:

Leeds landmarks lit up in yellow to celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month
(*Cooper, 2020*)

Alfie Best interview: how I built my big fat gypsy empire
(*Arlidge, 2019*)

It is noteworthy that best practice in referring to Gypsies and Travellers using capitalised initial letters (as members of ethnic minority groups) is largely missing from identified examples and even a ‘positive’ story on a

Romany business man with a highly successful string of companies will make reference to the popular cultural trope of ‘My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding’, and includes the phrase: “Best, a proud Romany, concedes: “There’s a lot of travellers out there that ain’t no good”.

Although further work is required on such analysis of social media and print media representation, compared to other minority ethnic communities, few positive articles appear, particularly in right leaning tabloids such as the Daily Mail and The Sun.

Preliminary review of ‘tone’ of articles that may appear to be more neutral still adopt a greater hostility when compared to references to other minority groups indicative of normalised discrimination towards the GTR populations and ‘under the line’ readers’ comments are frequently negative unless tracking evidences that editorial decisions have been taken to monitor/exclude or disabled comments.

Findings

For the purpose of the discussions that follow, the key themes, are collated under the following broad topics/headings with examples drawn from both the survey and interview data included in sub-sections.

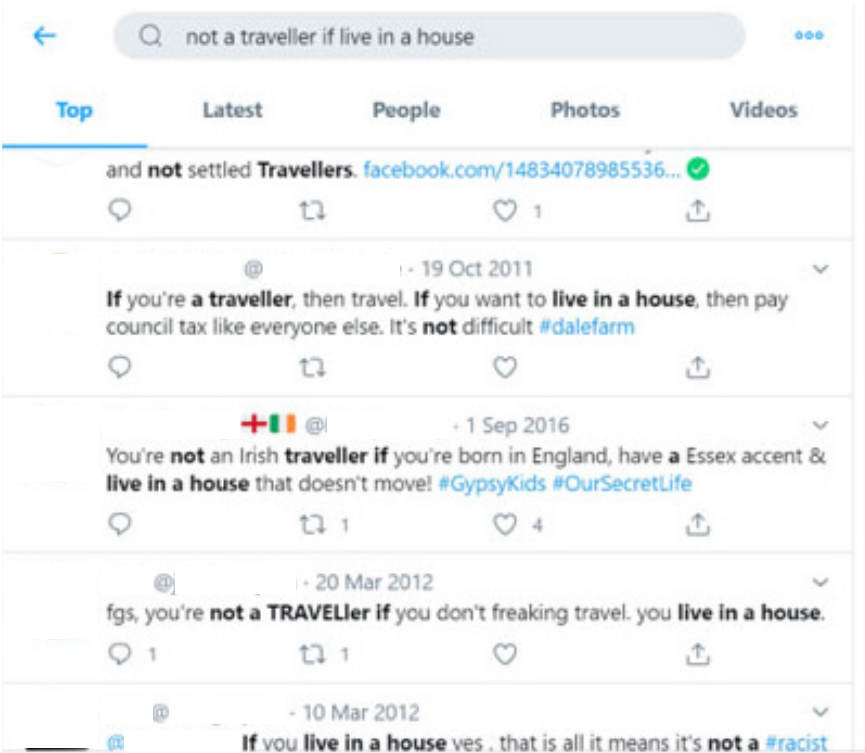
Emergent sub-themes such as identity/culture and gendered behaviours that reappear in more than one section, as well as experiences of bullying in school settings, are considered within the overarching discussions under each heading as follows.

- Incidents and experiences of hate crime
- Media influences and impacts
- Educational experiences
- Mental health, wellbeing, and suicide

Incidents and experiences of hate crime

As explored in the section on social media discourse and in the literature review, there is a wide spread perception that hate speech and hate perpetrated against members of the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities is somehow ‘different’ from that experienced by other minority ethnic communities. This failure in popular culture/discourse to recognise and (in the main) condemn hate speech or threats of hate crimes against GTR communities appears to occupy a complex territory between widespread acceptance of negative tropes and stereotypes, and potentially also a failure to recognise that condoning or repeating such language falls into the same category as utilising language which would undoubtedly be challenged and lead to the user

being blocked from social media platforms if utilised against other BAME or minority groups. In part, this fairly widespread failure by members of the public to identify hate speech or offensive language uttered against the GTR population may be because they do not know that many GTR communities are protected under the Equalities Act as ethnic minorities, given the frequent presentation that they have adopted a ‘problematic’ lifestyle often conflated with the negative tropes of criminality. Thus the tweets that follow offer a common example of confused perceptions of what it means to be a Traveller, with many participants claiming erroneously that someone loses their ethnicity if they live in housing.

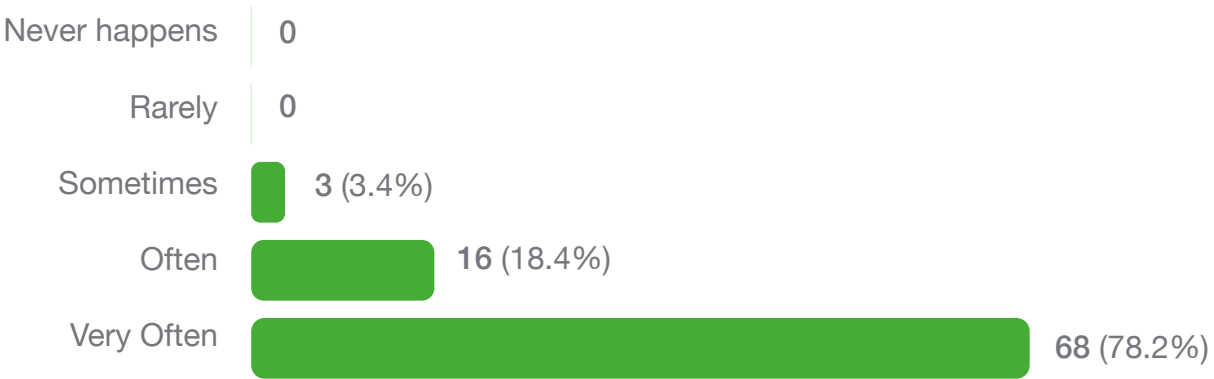


The presumption that someone has somehow ‘lost their ethnicity’ if not nomadising, appears frequently to be linked to the perception that threatening or using abusive words against GTR populations is somehow not an offence (in law), or indeed offensive as discriminating against someone purely for not living in ‘conventional housing’. The debates in relation to why and how hate speech and crimes against members of GTR community are seen as the ‘last acceptable form of racism’ are outside the scope of this report, but have been debated widely by scholars such as Hutchison et al. (2018) and McGarry (2017). As noted in the literature review, experiences of hate speech and discrimination are exceptionally widespread amongst GTR communities (Traveller

Movement 2017; WEC, 2019) and the findings from our own survey are no different in that respect. When asked how commonly hate speech or hate crime experienced by GTR community members occurs, 78% of our survey respondents suggest that incidents of hate speech/crime happen very often (with some comments suggesting this took place on constant or daily basis); 18% selected ‘often’ and only 3% of respondents indicated ‘sometimes’. Of those who selected ‘sometimes’ one was a Romani woman in her 60s, another a non-ethnic GTR community member (Boater in his 50s) and the other was a Roma woman in her 40s who explicitly compared the situation of living in the UK to that in her country of origin (Romania):

I do not feel it in the UK, but back home in Romania, non-Roma dislike us. We lived in a Roma community and did not feel the hate crime too much there. But when we were outside – then we always felt it

Figure 6. How commonly does hate speech or hate crime occur



In total, 53 out of 88 respondents had additional comments in relation to this question. A selection of examples drawn from respondents of varying ages, genders, ethnicities, places of residence, ethnic or other communities and whether working as an NGO representative or not, showed a remarkable degree of similarity in relation to types of comments they had experienced. As one respondent noted “People still think it’s not possible to be racist to a Gypsy” (Romani, female, 41–50 years) another stated “It’s simply just the last acceptable form of racism” (Welsh Traveller, male, 21–30 years) and a third:

► ***Children grow up listening to their parents so it’s drummed into them we are bad people*** ◀

Romani, female, 51–60 years

Hate speech and use of abusive terms, as well as bullying in schools were the most frequent examples cited, but the abusive language and terminology used, bore exceptional and shocking levels of commonality:

► ***As for hate crimes, I think online they’re huge. Some of the things I’ve read are absolutely atrocious. In my own local community, I’ve read comments of, ‘Hitler had the right idea. Put gas cylinders through the windows. Burn them out. Get a JCB’. Calls for violence. And that’s an out and out hate crime. It’s inciting racial violence. But trying to get the police or the criminal justice system to see it like that is very difficult. Can you imagine underneath a Sun article someone saying, ‘Well, I think that we should burn out the mosque? I think that we should set fire to the synagogue’? Whatever way round you want to put it. ‘I think we should go and burn down the Vatican’. It would be treated with outrage, absolute outrage. But it’s fully acceptable for you to say, ‘The Final Solution was the right idea’, to refer to the Holocaust, the Roma Holocaust. That’s absolutely fine to use words and to threaten to burn out innocent children’s homes. That seems acceptable*** ◀

Romani, female, 41–50 years, interview

► ***Pikie scum. Gypos. Hitler never finished the job*** ◀

Romani, male, 51–60 years

► ***We have many calls about hate speech and hate crimes but we know that most people don’t record or report incidents*** ◀

New Traveller, working in an NGO, female, 21–30 years

► ***It is part of everyday life people will assume they can say and put down Travellers and Gypsies and not see that they are being racist*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, no gender given/anonymous response, over 60 years

► ***When I have asked the question, some community members reply ‘daily’*** ◀

White British, working in an NGO, male, over 60 years

► ***Often in the work place, and on social media and in public places*** ◀

Irish Traveller, female, 41–50 years

► ***Almost daily. Especially in the media*** ◀

Scottish Traveller, female, 21–30 years

► ***It’s absolutely normal for them to use hateful language and make hateful assumptions*** ◀

Irish Traveller, female, 31–40 years

► ***It’s extremely common for me. From comments about my looks to my children being called ‘Pykie mongrels’ by parents at their school*** ◀

Romani, female, 31–40 years

► ***We get casual abuse right the way across society*** ◀

Pavee/Irish Traveller, male, 51–60 years

The regular occurrence of incidents gained from survey respondents was reinforced further with similar outcomes identified by focus group and interview participants, with one interviewee citing the example below, demonstrating the range and severity of hate incidents experienced by one family:

► ***Most hate crimes I and my family experience has been in the form of, but is not exclusive to, name calling, refusal to serve, physical threat and violence, stabbing, chased, theft, framing, indifference from law enforcement, harassment, turned away from work when ethnicity has been discovered, workplace bullying***

Welsh Gypsy, male, 21–30 years

Other similar examples include:

► ***I’ve seen it in my workplace, in my children’s schools and while out shopping or even going for food, not a single member of my family or extended family have not had some form of experience***

Romani Gypsy, female, 31–40 years

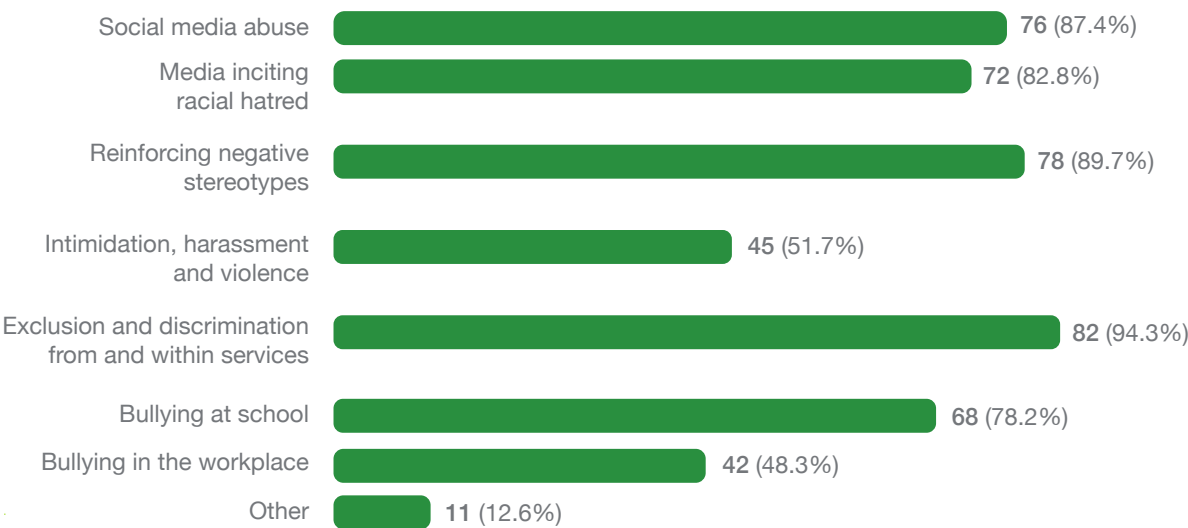
► ***The current situation for my people is to just put up with racism. No one cares what happens to us. Even the police are racist to GT peoples. Leaving us with nowhere to turn to for help. It is not even considered racist to hate Gypsies. And often Black people and Asian people are very racist to us saying that because we look white, we don’t experience racism. I think until it is recognised as a form of racism then nothing will improve the situation***

Scottish Gypsy/Traveller, female, 31–40 years

The research participants were asked about the most common forms of hate speech/ crime they experienced. The survey responses are highlighted in Figure 7, with exclusion and discrimination from and within services (e.g. health, education) experienced by 94%, reinforcement of negative stereotypes by 89%, social media abuse by 87% and media incitement to racial hatred by 82%. Also, notably and extremely concerning, given that bullying in school is associated with poor outcomes and adverse childhood

experiences, is the finding that 78% of respondents highlighted school bullying as significant hate related incidents experienced by themselves and/or their children, demonstrating how early in life hate incidents begin.

Figure 7. Most common forms of hate speech/crime



Eleven respondents provided additional information and typical comments referred to the context in which such events took place, for example:

► ***Landlords and their agents and neighbours, when living in bricks and mortar***

‘Other’ Irish Culturally/British born with dual nationality, female, 51–60 years

► ***In the pubs’ and clubs’ environment***

Romani Gypsy, female, 51–60 years

► ***Customers referring to Travellers as pikeys [not knowing the respondent was a member of the community themselves]***

Irish Traveller, male, 31–40 years

► ***The person usually doesn't realise it, but asking you to almost justify that you are a 'good Gypsy' and then being told you are the exception*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, female, 31–40 years

The theme of refusal of services and the influence of public authorities including the police on such apparently discriminatory behaviours emerged clearly during interviews. One interviewee (Romani woman, 41–50 years, resident in housing) narrated how a pub that she and her family had been using for years, and where her learning disabled daughter enjoyed helping set up a games night suddenly became barred to them following a change of landlord and a low level incident with some local Traveller boys:

► ***We went in it for years, I'd say about 20 years ... on a Sunday, we used to go there with children, used to have a lot of games nights, a lot of bingo, and everybody was, even the gorger people were really welcoming, they knew we were Travellers ... a lot of travellers used to go in there, and then the new landlord barred all Travellers because of something some young boys had done on a weekend. So, I went there on a Sunday to play the bingo, with my children, and bearing in mind it's only from 7 until 8:30, and then as soon as that finished we came home to get ready for school, work, or whatever, and the bar manager said, 'We've been told we're not allowed to serve any Gypsies or Travellers', and I said, 'Well, I've been coming here for three years [since the new management took over] and you haven't said anything', and even, like, the gorger people that were in there even stuck up for me and my children and said that we've never done anything wrong ... the manager, he came down and he said no. Well, in the end, I did take legal action against it, but the worst of it was my daughter, who's got special needs, that was one of her routines, and she looked forward to it. Even though I was upset, and my other children were upset, we just couldn't explain to her why we couldn't go anymore, because she looked forward to it, she had that on her calendar every Sunday*** ◀

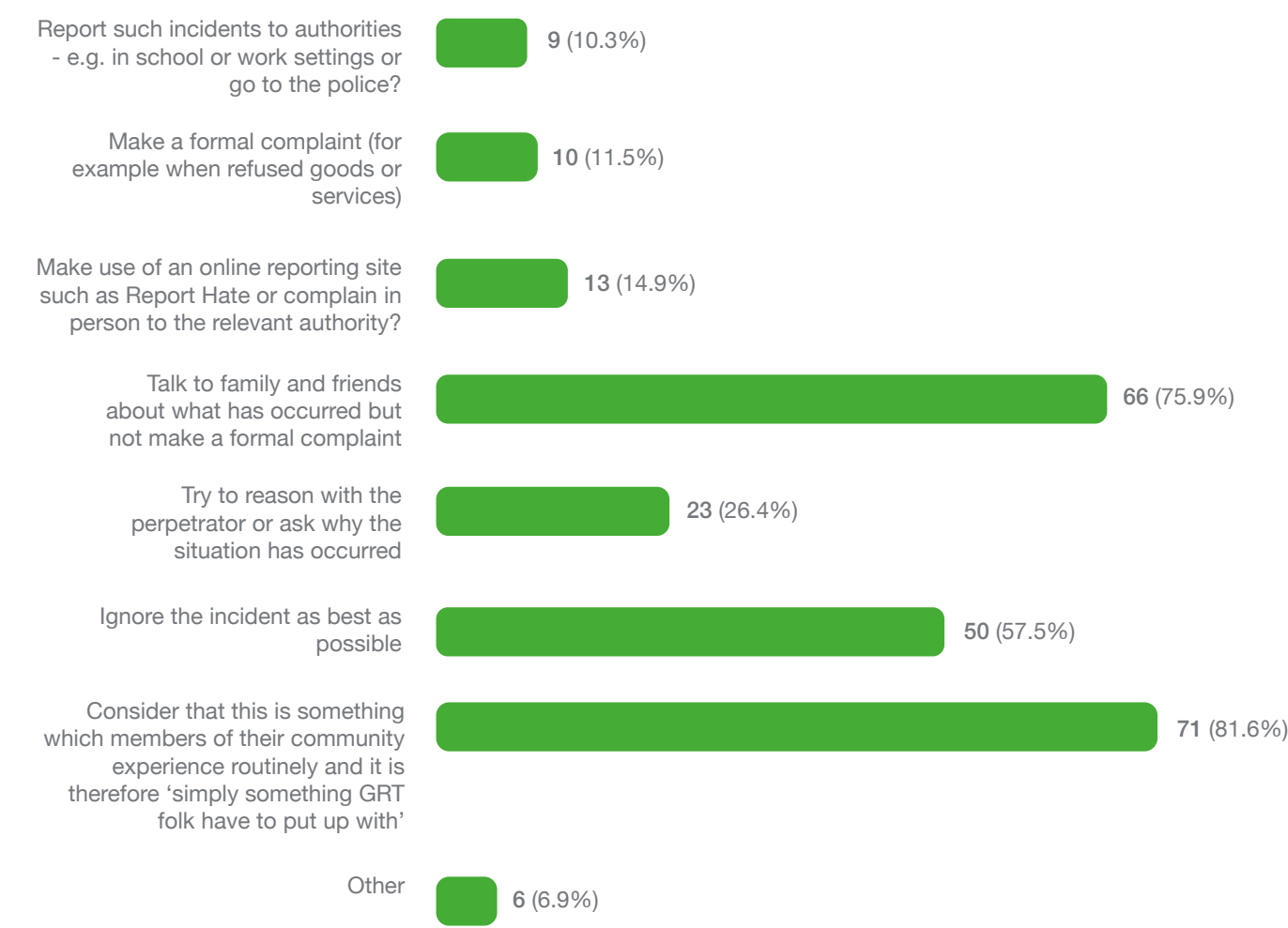
Ultimately, the legal challenge failed as a result of a legal error involving misfiled documentation, but despite local residents complaining and boycotting the pub, the interviewee's family and other GTR community members in the neighbourhood were only able to access a single local bar at a neighbourhood football club where the manager is known to be friendly to local GTR communities whom he has known for many years. Even then, as the interviewee stressed:

► ***But if anything's going on, he's made, by the police, to shut down. He wouldn't [by choice] because he used to have weddings there, funerals, but now, for the last three or four years, he has been stopped, because he says that the police have been on to him and said that he's not allowed to serve, he can open up, but he's not allowed to serve any alcohol [to] Travellers – just Travellers*** ◀

Similarly, a young woman of 'mixed ethnicity' Traveller/non-Traveller (aged <20 years) recounted during an interview how "I can remember one of my family members telling me that they were kicked out of a restaurant because someone found out their background and complained. This was quite a while ago". This interviewee emphasised that she has cousins who live on a local site who experience considerably more discrimination than she has ever done as she 'passes' because she lives in a house and simply identifies as 'White British', whilst her cousin, and by extension her younger sister, who "go to school. Someone found out their background, they get shouted 'pikey' at them all the time..."

Despite the substantial number and regularity of hate speech/ incidents experienced by GTR community respondents, the level of reporting remains very low, in common with other research findings. An individual's most likely response to such incidents are shown in Figure 8. More than one response could be given.

Figure 8. Most likely response to incidents of hate speech/crime



Important variables can be isolated in relation to response from community activists and those working in NGOs, non-ethnic GTR respondents (e.g. Boaters, New Travellers) and those who identified as ‘other’, e.g. White British, Afro-Caribbean, half European Roma and half Traveller. Respondents who worked for NGOs (based on their experiences of supporting community members) were most likely to suggest that community members would not make a formal report of a hate crime, although in fact Romany Gypsies who worked for NGOs were the category of respondents who were most likely to make a formal complaint.

Irish Travellers, Roma and Showmen respondents (non-NGO staff) were least likely to suggest that members of their community would make a formal complaint. By far the most common response at 81.6% of answers suggested that respondents would simply feel that experiences of hate crime or hate speech was something experienced routinely and had to be put up with; whilst a slightly smaller number of respondents (75.9%) said that they would speak to family and friends about the incident.

Figure 9. Respondents most and least likely response to hate crime/hate speech by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Report such incidents to authorities -e.g. in school or work settings or go to the police	Make a formal complaint (for example when refused goods or services)	Make use of an online reporting site such as Report Hate or complain in person to the relevant authority?	Talk to family and friends about what has occurred but not make a formal complaint	Try to reason with the perpetrator or ask why the situation has occurred	Ignore the incident as best as possible	Something which members of their community routinely and it is therefore 'simply something GRT folk have to put up with'	Other	No answer	Totals
Bargee	0	0	0	6	0	2	4	0	0	12
English Romani Gypsy	6	6	10	26	12	15	25	4	1	105
Irish Traveller	0	0	0	3	1	7	10	0	0	21
Roma	0	0	0	8	0	7	8	0	0	23
Scottish Gypsy/Traveller	2	3	2	4	5	1	5	0	0	22
Showperson	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	7
Welsh Gypsy	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	0	0	12
Other	0	0	0	15	2	13	16	1	0	47
No answer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	9	10	13	66	23	50	71	6	1	249

Comments provided under the ‘other’ category (where more detail could be provided) suggested that a violent crime, or an incident involving a child experiencing hate crime in school would be more likely to be reported to the relevant authorities, but even then, there was limited expectation that this would lead to any adequate response from school or police:

► ***When I reported my child being called a pykie mongrel to police I did it online. I left only my email address and first name. The police emailed me and asked to speak to me. They said it was like trying to find Lord Lucan getting hold of me! That is why we don't report this because nothing is done about it*** ◀

Romani female, 31–40 years

Interestingly, three female survey respondents – one aged 41–50 years; one aged 51–60 and one aged 21–30 years (two Romani and one Showman) all noted that in addition to speaking to family and friends, thought that members of their community would 'retaliate', noting that this itself could be problematic and lead to more difficulties for the person who had initially been victimised:

► ***Get angry and involved in a situation where they look bad because they are frustrated and provoked, when actually they are the victims*** ◀

Showman, female, 51–60 years

This was also a theme that arose within focus groups where participants spoke about cultured and gendered expectations of 'standing up for yourself', which led to young men in particular being seen as the cause of the initial problem and could sometimes end up with them becoming involved in criminal proceedings:

► ***I think it's mostly secondary school. I know that, a few months ago, it ended up in... My cousin got in a fight over it [responding to racist taunting], but then it ended up being his fault because he started the fight*** ◀

Mixed Traveller/White British heritage, living in a house, female, <20 years

► ***From my experience, when I went to school, if I reported something [racist bullying] it would get ignored, blatantly ignored, to the point where I would be in fights weekly, because people would say, 'He's a Traveller, I want to fight him to prove myself.' Weekly I would be in fights, to the point where I had people blatantly say to me, in a classroom, 'You dirty so-and-so' I would fight them there on the spot, because I wouldn't back down at the time, I'd go for it, leap across tables, the lot. I wouldn't care. I would do it. When I got [asked] 'Why did you jump across the classroom and throw a chair at that boy?' I said, 'Because he called me a dirty so-and-so.', they would laugh*** ◀

Showman/Romani mixed heritage, male, 31–40

► ***My brother ... he's 6 foot 3, and the boy can fight, let's put it that way. A lot of people would try it on with him. The thing is with XX, that was it, he was going to have a fight and he was excluded multiple times. I think he went to about seven or eight schools, couldn't do anything with him. Finally, they put him into one of those, what are they called again, naughty boys school ... then, before you know it, it was a domino effect, young offenders, this, that and the other. But [it stemmed from] not being appreciated, not being respected. The thing is, he stuck up for himself all the time. He knew if he came back home and said he'd been in a fight, dad would clip him up the ears. The way my mum and dad saw it, especially my dad, was, 'You've got yourself into trouble. If someone says anything to you don't say anything, ignore'. So, we couldn't win*** ◀

Romani, female, 31–40 years

This view was shared with interviewees:

- *I think young boys, it's hard for them, because they'll retaliate. If someone calls them a name in the street they'll probably get themselves into arguments and maybe hit somebody if they get called a pikey or whatever. Then you'll find that they're the ones who get the bad rep or the bad name, while the fellow who started it in the first place just walked away, and apparently didn't commit any offence by calling him a pikey. I think a lot of Travellers, especially younger boys, get in trouble like that. Especially if they're with a group or with a girl. They've got a rep[utation] to protect, do you know what I mean?* ■

Irish Traveller, female, 41–50 years

The survey responses in relation to the commonality of experiencing racism (including racist bullying in school) align with the findings from both focus groups and interviews. The overwhelming majority – in particular those who are members of ethnic GTR communities – highlighted that hate speech/crime is so common that it is accepted and normalised and hence not reported. The commonality of experience was described by one interviewee as “background noise”:

- *The same old thing that happens all the time. And it just becomes tiresome. We almost get fatigue of talking about it. It comes to a point where you're just like, 'Oh, ra-ra-ra'. It's the same thing ... It's just background noise. And that in itself I think stands as a testament of how ingrained racism is. That we're just exhausted with discussing it, exhausted with describing it. It doesn't change* ■

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years

One focus group participant reflected on the relentless emotional burden associated with challenging hate speech in online discourse and social media postings noting that:

- *The views espoused on social media are quite common. And I think a trigger point is unauthorised encampments, fly tipping and things like that. It's often the comments underneath media posts. So from [tabloid newspapers] it's the comments underneath there. It just seems that people put all sorts of things* ■

Romani, activist, female, over 60 years

One major issue confronting even well-networked activists and those employed by NGOs, is the challenge around ensuring that the reporting of incidents leads to action; a theme that emerged in several narratives in interviews and focus groups (e.g. reporting the pub manager for barring a family from using his premises mentioned earlier). A number of respondents across all aspects of the research spoke of their frustration of having made a report to police, schools or other authorities and gone through the ‘bother’ of seeking redress only to find that nothing occurred; an issue which is also identified in the Galloway/ GATE Herts (2020) evaluation report.

A Boater (41–50 years) who works as a support worker with Irish Traveller and New Travellers, recounted in an interview the difficulties she had, despite her professional role and knowledge, in convincing a school to take seriously matters of bullying impacting a Traveller child:

- *So we had to get Traveller Education [involved], and I think we got [race equality charity working with BAME communities on hate reporting] involved with that as well, just mediating with the school. It was pretty horrific, actually, because the school said, 'Well, there's nothing going on inside school. They're bullying each other outside of school, and they're doing stuff on WhatsApp and [social media]'. So they said, 'It's nothing to do with us' which is, obviously, outrageous. So there was a bit of work going on there, because, obviously, the impact for the child, in terms of her mental health, in the end, she didn't want to go to school. She took herself out of school. She was, obviously, really upset. She got beaten up on a bus one day. Her mum was, obviously, absolutely furious and upset and*

worried. There was a lot of stress, obviously, going on with that family. Then for the school to turn around and just, basically, say, ‘It’s not our problem’ was pretty shocking. Because every school, as far as I know, has an anti-bullying policy, and that should include online stuff, and it didn’t

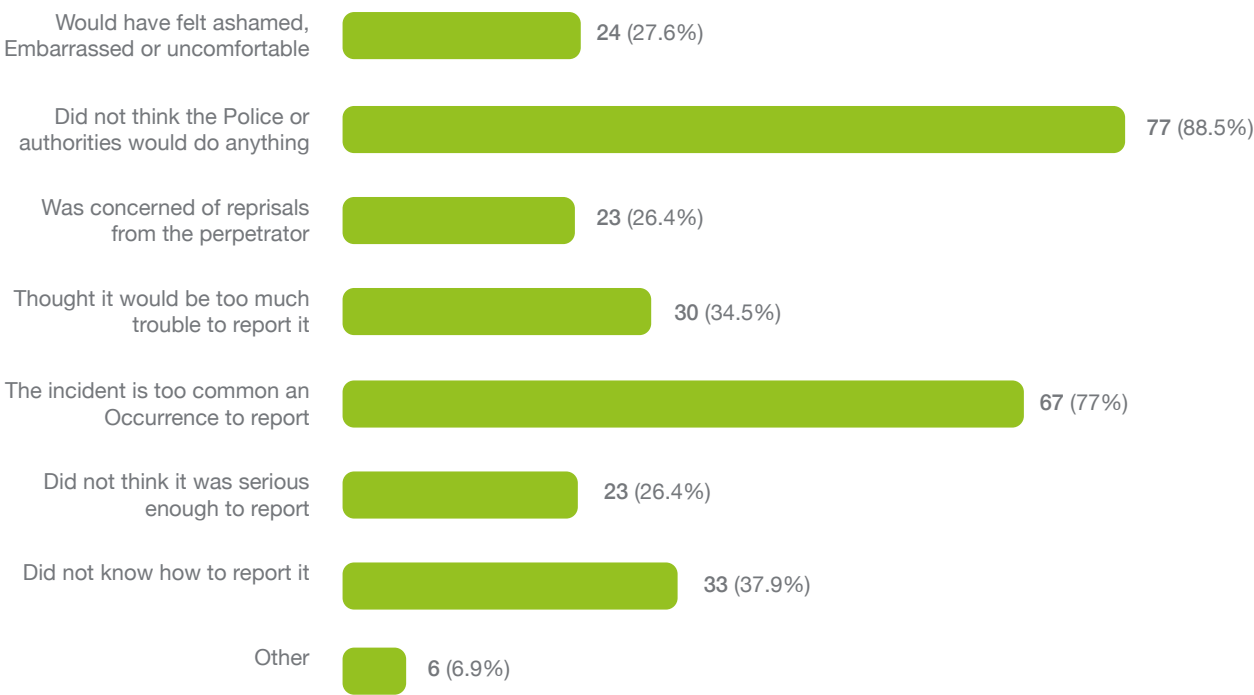
In some cases, historic mistrust and horrendous incidents of abuse from policy officers or other authorities have left a deep legacy of anguish which has been passed down through generations, as discussed by a focus group participant:

It’s very sad to hear the old stories that the older generation have of discrimination, of local police officers in the town that I live in, kick in the fire into my granny’s face and burning my aunt. She [aunt] still bears the scars today. Of local shops telling my dad, you know, you can’t come in here. We don’t serve Travellers in here. And to think, you know, that that may well be 65 years ago. It still happens today. What’s changed in 65 years? It’s heart-breaking. Nothing’s changed. You know, the community, time, everything’s moved on so much in 65 years apart from the attitude towards Gypsies and Travellers

Romany, female, 41–50 years

As a result of the toxic combination of ‘normalisation’ of hate incidents and a lack of trust in the police and other authorities, often including schools, to take any action on complaints of hate crime/speech, only 10% of survey respondents indicated that they would formally report hate crime and hate speech incidents.

Figure 10. Detailed reasons for not reporting hate crime or hate speech to the police



An overwhelming 88.5% of survey respondents indicated that they lack trust and confidence in the police, other authorities, and public service providers to take action with regard to hate speech and hate crimes. Additional commentary from focus group and interview participants endorsed these findings, with participants citing concern regarding institutional racism and further victimisation by police or court processes.

One interviewee who had worked closely with the police in her professional role over a number of years, recounted how she was horrified when the depths of racist stereotyping became obvious to her:

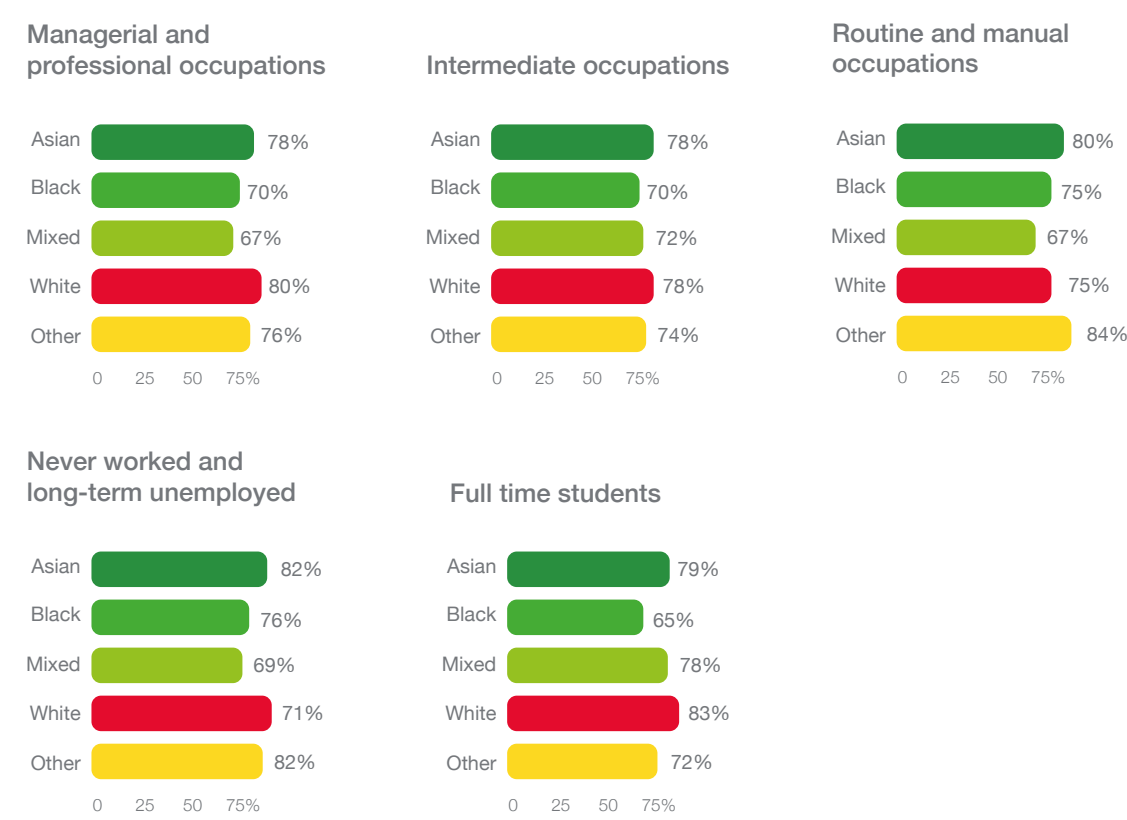
What scared me was I was working with the police. I was [a] Travellers’ Liaison [Officer]. And I was at a policeman’s function, a leaving do, and two police officers behind me said to each other, one said to the other, ‘Who’s the blonde with the sergeant?’ And the other fellow replied, ‘That’s his PA’. And he went, ‘Oh is that her, the pikey assistant?’ And I felt very scared. I’m meant to feel safe around police but I felt scared, because they’re obviously still racist

Irish Traveller, female, 41–50 years

Whilst lack of trust in police and statutory authorities is not unique to GTR communities (as has been evidenced by analysis of Black Lives Matters discourse and commentary in recent months and see further Awan et al., 2019), in stark contrast to our data, Government statistics drawn from the British Crime Survey (2014–2017) found that trust and confidence in the police service were still reported as being

held by around 70% of Black respondents, 78% of Asian and 80% of White respondents. Even amongst those who were students or had been long-term unemployed – categories where it may be likely to report less positive attitudes towards and experiences of the police service – trust in the local police only dropped a few percentage points (HM Government, 2020).

Figure 11. HM Government (2020) findings on confidence in the police by ethnicity and socio-economic status



Myers and Lantz (2020), in their analysis of hate crime reporting in the UK and USA, noted that access to third-party reporting systems in the UK increases the likelihood of reporting hate crimes (highly pertinently for the work of GATE Herts

and Report Racism GRT). Even with this option, and despite variable reasons why reporting may not occur (including to shield the perpetrator or because of fear of reprisals), it was still only 17% of victims in the UK who indicated that the primary

reason for not reporting a hate crime to the police, was because they felt that nothing would be done. This finding is in stark contrast to the 88.5% of our GTR respondents who indicated the same reason. Similarly, whilst the findings on non-reporting included in the University of Leicester Centre for Hate Studies report (Hardy & Chakraborti, 2016) which explored why people don't report hate crime and the needs of victims of such offences (sample of 466 survey respondents in Hertfordshire who had been victimised, and experienced at least one hate crime and 81 in-depth interviews) was more closely aligned to our data in relation to numbers of those who would not report a crime, the response "Did not think anybody would take me seriously" was only given by 39% of respondents to the Leicester study. Further, 13% of their respondents felt that this would lead to retaliation, embarrassment precluded reporting in 12% of cases; and 11% of respondents were not aware of who or how to make such a report. Thus once again comparison of these studies indicate the variables which pertain when comparing victims of hate crime/speech from GTR communities to wider populations.

77% of our survey respondents indicated that the commonality of their experience represented another reason for not reporting hate crimes or hate speech, whilst 37.9% and 34.5% respectively noted that they **neither knew how to make such a report, or felt that it would be too much bother** – suggestive of respondents reflecting on incidents which they were believed to be relatively minor and commonplace, such as experiences of hate speech etc. This finding is both indicative of the crucial need for increased publicity pertaining to how to make third-party reports of hate crime, as well as the need to increase awareness of support via (for example) the Social Changemakers. Ultimately however, there is a

requirement to increase confidence in reporting such incidents to the police and other authorities which would appear to be best demonstrated by clear, unambiguous responses from authorities which dispel the sense that hate speech and hate crime against GTR communities is "the last acceptable form of racism".

Drilling deeper into our findings in relation to reasons for not reporting hate speech/crime to the authorities, we found that analysing by ethnicity revealed a varied but concerning picture of trust, knowledge and anxiety. It is important to stress here that the low numbers of respondents from some communities (particularly Showmen and Welsh Gypsies) makes it difficult to extrapolate clear patterns, but core patterns by ethnicity of respondent are presented below.

When isolating responses of those who identified as 'other' – which includes non GTR/community members who work with communities – we have sought to identify those who have partial GTR heritage. Looking more closely at those who are for example of 'mixed' heritage of (for example half Irish Traveller, half Roma; or half Romany, half White British) we see little variation from the responses of other 'ethnic' GTR communities with whom they are most closely aligned.

Of those who responded to say that they would be **too embarrassed to report** hate crime/speech incidents to the police or other authorities, 18% of such respondents were Irish Travellers; 33% of 'Boaters/Bargees'; 33% of Romani Gypsies, and 33% Scottish Travellers and 66% of Welsh Travellers.

It was striking that respondents who indicated that they **"wouldn't know how to make such a report"** were 100% of the (small sample) of

Showmen; 66% of the (small sample) of Welsh Gypsies; 33% of Boaters/Bargees; 33% of Roma; 29% of Romani Gypsies, and 55% of Irish Travellers who accounted in total for a sample size of 3.5 times that of self-identifying Welsh Gypsies. Taken with the response regarding lower levels of embarrassment about reporting such incidents, this is indicative of the need to increase outreach to Irish Traveller/Pavee communities in relation to reporting mechanisms, particularly when taken with this group's response to the issue of confidence in the police.

Moreover, Boaters and Showmen – as they are not 'ethnic groups' – will not, unless they have other protected characteristics – be included in data collated as a hate crime, which complicates the picture, despite evidence provided during interviews and within the survey that these categories of GTR communities (occupational travellers) are also vulnerable to hate crime/speech:

► ***Living in public spaces you are aware a lot of people pass by you may not remember them but they remember you. [!] hear a lot of comments sometimes directly aimed at myself*** ◀

Boater/Bargee, female, 41–50 years

► ***Online it is worst, but also local residents in some areas freely feel like that can use hate speech around us*** ◀

Boater/Bargee, female, 31–40 years

► ***It's an everyday occurrence*** ◀

Showman, male, 51–60 years

Indeed, in response to a subsequent survey question on experiences of hate crime, one of the Showman respondents (female, 51–60 years) referred to having “experienced 15 physical attacks over 40 years” when undertaking her work.

When we examine (by ethnicity) findings related to failing to report because of **fear of reprisals**, it is

again noticeable that differences exist by ethnicity of respondent. Again those identifying as 'other', unless they are clearly related to a particular ethnic group and considered alongside them (with similar responses), are excluded from this analysis. 60% of Scottish Travellers reported that they would be scared of reprisals from perpetrators, 33% of Roma respondents and 18% each of Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers provided this answer.

Further work would be required to explore why Scottish Travellers have a higher level of concern over reprisals and this may be to do with visibility if a small community, or location of residence etc. No trend could be identified by other groups.

When we consider the response **“Too common an experience to report”**, which is closely aligned to responses pertaining to “Too much trouble to report” and also “Didn't think it was serious enough to report”, we find that 100% of Welsh Gypsies (small sample) 100% of Showmen

(small sample) 66% each of Scottish Travellers and Roma; 71% of Romani Gypsies and 82% of Irish Travellers gave this answer. The bleakness of such saturation of exposure to hate speech and hate crime (as is highlighted above through qualitative data from interviews and focus groups) can be summed up by some examples from the the additional comments provided by survey respondents. Concerningly, 60% of the additional comments referred to a sense that the police or courts would re-victimise the complainant or not believe them:

► ***Fatigued from reporting before and no consequences for the perpetrators*** ◀

Showman, no gender stated, 51–60 years

► ***[Would be] concerned that may be further victimised by police or court processes*** ◀

'Other', female, 51–60 years

► ***Police are just as much part of society as the perpetrator*** ◀

Pavee/Irish Traveller, male, 51–60 years

► ***Racism comes from the authorities, who do you trust and would they believe you?”*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, male, over 60 years

► ***Because I know we get looked down on like lower class citizens so what's the point?*** ◀

Roma, female, 31–40 years

► ***The police are just as bad as anyone else, sometimes worse*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, anonymous, 31–40

When deeper analysis by ethnicity takes place in relation to the core finding that respondents **did not have confidence that the police or other authorities would do anything about the hate speech/hate crime**, we noted with deep concern that 100% of Showmen (a small sample but who are excluded from recording/protection as an ethnic group) 88% of Roma respondents; 83% of Scottish Travellers; 66% of Welsh Gypsies (small sample); 83% of Boaters/Bargees (also not protected under the Equalities Act); and 94% of Romani Gypsies had no confidence in the authorities to deal with their complaint. It is noteworthy and would require

additional work to understand this answer, a lower rate (63%) of Irish Travellers/Pavee stated that they had no confidence in the police. We thus can identify what appears to be a higher level of confidence in the police amongst Irish Travellers but conversely a lower level of knowledge on how to make a complaint about hate crime and hate speech. This is coupled with a higher tolerance/expectation of experiencing such hate crime or hate speech amongst Irish Travellers, given that 82% of this population stated that the experience is so common they don't tend to report such offences/abuse.

Institution/structural racism

The theme of barriers to reporting and effective response to hate crime and hate speech arising from institutional and structural racism is a major concept within this study. Whilst this theme was expressly articulated in this study, the evidence of such structural exclusions and repeated and long-term failure of authorities (including newspapers monitoring 'below the line' comments on articles, or social media platforms failing to respond to complaints about racism or discriminatory language), and the impact on community inclusion, trust and engagement with authorities is widely identified in reports and articles (see for example, Cemlyn et al., 2009; EHRC, 2018; O'Neill, 2020; WEC, 2019; Richardson & O'Neill, 2012; James, 2014; 2020).

To this end, it is worth highlighting that the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2018) study and review *Is Britain Fairer?* found that whilst three-quarters (74%) of people agreed that there should be equality for all groups, 44% of respondents felt able to openly express negative feelings towards Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, the highest number of responses pertaining to categories of people with protected characteristics or other potential 'risks' for experiencing

discrimination. This sense of being perceived of as 'fair game' for racism and discrimination and exclusion from the protections afforded to other minority groups emerged strongly in relation to our findings and was highly pertinent when respondents reflected on their mental health and emotional wellbeing. Discussions on the impact of repeated exposure to racist incidents and 'race-based trauma' leading to psychological symptoms similar to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders, anxiety, depression and other symptoms of psychological distress, is included in the literature on BAME and other minority communities, which to date has overwhelmingly excluded the experiences of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma populations (Carter et al. 2020; Pieterse et al., 2012; McKenzie, 2006; Bhui, 2002).

Despite this exclusion in the professional psychological literature, our respondents were clearly alert to, and often expressed outrage at, the ways in which public authorities, from the police through to health care and education providers, failed to take account of the level and damage caused by GTR populations experiencing discrimination "at all levels". Interviewees stated:

► ***It is absolutely endemic to all communities, especially the Irish Traveller and the Romani Gypsy communities*** ◀

Boater, female, 41–50 years, working in an NGO supporting GTR communities

► ***Who are they going to report this to? The same police officer that's coming to evict them? Are they going to report it to them? ... XX [local police force] have this unit called Gypsy and Traveller rural crime unit ... what does that actually mean? Are you working on behalf of the Gypsies and Travellers and rural crime? If they [Gypsy/ Travellers] report a hate crime to you, are you the ones that they***

report that to? Or is your specific remit to attack Gypsies and Travellers? ... I didn't get an answer [when she asked the local police force] ... But I can tell you they are extremely racist. XX police [force's] Gypsy and Traveller Unit is hugely racist ■

Romani, female, 41–50 years

Focus group participants held the same sentiments:

■ *A lot of people feel if we were to report every incident that happened to us, then we'd be there for days and we would never stop ... a lot of it's difficult to prove. A lot of it is unconscious bias, and people aren't, maybe they're not so forceful to be obvious in their racism, you know, it's hidden racism and it's quiet* ■

Female, community member⁸

⁸N.B.: in larger focus groups after initial identification of all participants by gender, age, ethnicity etc transcriptions thereafter only provide information on gender of speaker so it is not always possible to identify the precise demographics of the individual speaker.

■ *It permeates the daily life of many members of Gypsy and Traveller communities; particularly people who may present as visibly Gypsy or Traveller as well, whether that's because they're living roadside or on a Traveller site, or because of accents, or different kinds of small, subtle things ... in general society they are regularly experiencing both micro-aggressions, clear acts of hate speech, and then a feeling of, even where it's not tangible and obvious – maybe someone isn't saying this particular word – people are experiencing lower levels of trust from wider society, high levels of social exclusion. Then of course, we see in our casework and our outreach work that people are often experiencing sometimes quite severe hate crimes. Also, whenever they are moving house, or entering a town seem to be moments where it seems to be more prevalent as well* ■

NGO case-worker, Irish ethnicity, not a community member

■ *[Roma] are seen as the main threat, as people who live on the streets, as though those who are dirty, have no food, have no medication. Because of these articles in online newspapers, let's say, the hatred is increasing. People are abusing them outside on the streets* ■

Roma, female 21–30 years, activist⁹

In this pilot study, it has not been possible to interrogate in great depth evidence of structural racism and how this specific form of discrimination impacts trust in authorities as well as potentially exacerbating mental ill-health. However, the following quotations from focus group participants further evidences how activists and case workers in particular, perceive communities to which they belong, or whom they support, are both excluded from discourse in certain contexts. They are also impacted by the pervasive sense that they are not welcome, are automatically viewed with suspicion, or are not seen as members of the society in which they live:

■ *Before I was in Gypsy and Traveller activism or organisations, these events would have happened, and I thought that would have made UK press, and I was completely unaware of them. So that was quite shocking that these really significant events could happen to two people that I've known separately, and that wasn't seemed to be considered media-worthy, or it wasn't covered in that way* ■

Non-community member, employed by an NGO, female 31–40 years¹⁰

■ *People have actual physical vulnerabilities of being in public spaces, being surrounded by populations who might not understand their way of life. And therefore it makes them easy targets. But I think obviously, especially the more subtle and structural, and the kind of trust levels of racism and discrimination that's permeating that aspect of everybody's lives* ■

Non-community member, employed by NGO, female, 21–30 years

⁹The speaker was reflecting on the way in which members of her community are perceived of as both migrants and subject to racism/negative discourse post-Brexit in particularly in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, particularly when involved in street level activities such as where homeless, begging, selling the Big Issue or congregating outside of over-crowded houses in some localities – see further under discussions on ‘media’ representations).

¹⁰Speaking about two separate incidents of fire-bombings/attacks on ‘roadside Traveller caravans’, which had occurred prior to her employment in the NGO but were evidenced in a fairly small EU meeting on experiences of GTR communities in the UK.

■ *The main reason they don’t report [crimes] is because they think nothing gets done. How many times do I have to keep saying, ‘Report racism. Do it now’. They think nothing gets done. It’s been proved because it’s happened to me. The police are dealing with, all the time, and they still fluff it over. I told them. I told the Superintendent. I said, ‘It’s not good saying... As soon as it’s Travellers you fluff it over.’ He said, ‘Well, that’s your opinion. We treat them all the same’. I said, ‘But you don’t. What you say and what you do are two different things. The police are a lot to blame*

Romani, community activist, over 60 years

An interviewee also said:

■ *When all travelling women get together they say, ‘You’ll never guess what?’ Like I said about being asked to leave the supermarket or being followed around the supermarket. I hear that every day. Every day. Or they get pulled over by the police and they keep them longer than they normally would*

Irish Traveller, female, 41–50 years

Importantly too, it was suggested that there is an interplay between ‘common-knowledge’ understanding of GTR cultures, and how communities operate, which can negatively impact service delivery. One focus group participant explained this by stating:

■ *We’re constantly having to support people who are professionals who are meant to be delivering inclusive services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to unlearn mistruths about the communities. So we’re on a back foot in that sense, in that*

people come with this assumption of lots of things that are quite discriminatory, and actually people are using that to inform their practice in their kind of daily work; whether they’re looking at sexual health, whether they’re looking at children’s services, if they’re looking at domestic violence, all these different things. They have these pre-formed – but not well-informed – presumptions about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, and it affects the way they engage with members of those communities

Non-GTR community member, employed by an NGO with a major health and social care focus, female, 31–40 years

Spikes in hate speech/crimes

As illustrated in Figure 6, the vast majority of respondents to the survey as well as those who took part in interviews and focus groups – emphasised that hate speech and hate crimes are a routine and highly regular experience in the lives of GTR community members. “As regular as rain”, as one participant (woman, identifying as ‘Other’ aged 51–60 years) phrased it.

We asked all participants if they were able to identify particular ‘spikes’ in hate speech and hate crime. There was a high level of consensus of opinion that these were clearly identifiable, as were triggers for increases in hate crime/hate speech. Whilst not all respondents felt that their

communities were directly impacted by these spikes, ethnic Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in particular were able to point to the correlation between their communities and presumptions/ reporting of them as criminals, law breakers, or associated with anti-social behaviour in public discourse (including from politicians), media representations and print or broadcast media. For example, see earlier discussion on the Big Fat Gypsy Wedding programme, the April 2020 Dispatches episode (The Truth About Traveller Crime), as well as publicity pertaining to particular high profile criminal cases such as the death of a police officer in 2019 and the associated manslaughter trial in July 2020.

Figure 12. Whether respondents can identify ‘spikes’ in hate crime reporting



Figure 13. Whether ‘spikes’ in incident identified by ethnicity of respondent

Ethnicity	Do you ever notice a 'spike' in incidents of hate speech/crime?		No answer	Totals
	Yes	No		
Bargee	5	1	0	6
English Romani Gypsy	29	4	1	34
Irish Traveller	9	2	0	11
Roma	7	1	1	9
Scottish Gypsy/Traveller	5	1	0	6
Showperson	2	0	0	2
Welsh Gypsy	3	0	0	3
Other	13	4	0	17
No answer	0	0	0	0
Totals	73	13	2	88

As can be seen, the majority of respondents identified such flows of increase in hate crime/ speech. A small number of respondents did not answer this question. It is worth commenting that ‘ethnic’ Gypsies and Travellers (and Showmen) were somewhat more likely to comment on this phenomenon than those who were members of non-ethnic GTR groups such as Boaters, or who identified as being ‘other’. This is perhaps indicative of the sensitivity to such phenomenon of those most likely to experience discrimination on a personal level predicated on ethnicity.

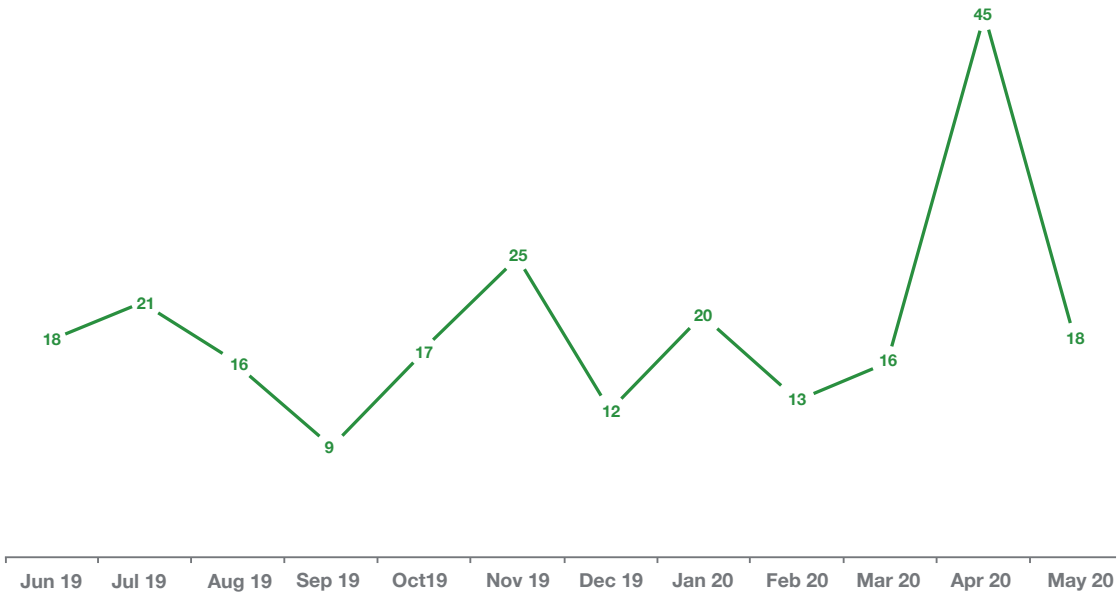
One hundred percent of Showmen and Welsh Travellers (both small samples) replied in the affirmative; 88% of Roma; 85% of Romani Gypsies; 83% of Scottish Travellers; 82% of Irish Travellers; 76% of those who identified as ‘other’ including non-ethnic staff working in NGOs/mixed heritage or relatives of ethnic G/T populations (for example New Traveller who is also a parent of a child whose father is an Irish Traveller and 71% of Boaters/Bargees.

The role of the media – and the risk of amplification of hate crime/hate speech

There was a repeated and clear emphasis on the role of the media and indeed politicians in creating spikes in hate speech and hate crime. This particular connection between media discussions and amplification of negative views of GTR communities associated with hate offences led to our convening a focus group on this topic, in the wake of the controversial ‘Dispatches Programme’ broadcast in April 2020.

A chart mapping numbers of reports of hate speech/crime made to the Report Hate GRT third-party reporting portal, presented in the “2019–20 Report Hate, GRT Evaluation report” (Galloway/GATE Herts, 2020: 21) vividly represent one such recent incident, showing the impact of the Dispatches programme in April 2020.

Figure 14. Hate speech/crime reported to Report Racism GRT – 2019–20



It must also be emphasised that many other incidents would not have been reported via Report Hate GRT so this evidence merely captures the ‘tip of the iceberg’. It is anticipated that a similar spike will be found when analysis takes place of the time frame covering the trial and convictions of the defendants in the police officer manslaughter case which is not included in this timeframe. Indeed, it has already been noted (Quarmby & Townsend, 2020) that the media have overwhelmingly failed to comment on Gypsy and Traveller community condemnations of the crime and instead emphasised once again the ethnicity of the defendants and their culture, essentially reiterating the trope articulated within the Dispatches programme of the essential criminality of the communities. Regrettably also,

partially at least in response to a senior police officer’s comments in the Quarmby and Townsend article that emphasised that ethnicity should not be conflated with criminality, it can be seen that a number of serving and former police officers have commented negatively on their perceptions of GTR populations, further illustrating the points made on attitudes of authorities and some police officers to the communities. In turn, this has led to intensive public debate and commentary across social media on institutional racism within the police service, drawing comments from NGOs and organisations such as the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Police Association, which is made up of serving and former police officers from the GTR communities.



Media representations and commentary on such shocking cases as the police officer manslaughter trial may add to the cyclical nature of hostile representations of GTR communities, as in this Twitter example below – which was challenged by NGOs and activists.



It would thus appear however that there is a complex and often toxic interplay between mainstream media, social media and the attitudes of and behaviours by staff within statutory authorities and services which feeds into and enhances further the risk of institutional racism.

As reflected upon in earlier sections of this report, the broadcasting of the Dispatches programme was merely the latest in a cycle of such incidents where sensationalist programmes have been made by broadcasters about GTR communities.

Whilst the Ofcom investigation into this particular case is ongoing, the outrage against this programme articulated by community members, activists, anti-racist campaigners and NGOs on this occasion, and indeed the willingness of members of the wider public to complain about

the programme are, however, indicative of a shift of attitude to some extent and recognition amongst a slowly increasing number of public authorities and individuals that racism against GTR communities is part of the wider anti-racist debate which is current in the world in 2020.

To that end, Friends Families and Travellers, the NGO that collated complaints to the Dispatches programme, reported that over 7000 members of the public, of which a large number were members of the GTR communities, contacted them to ask for their objections to be collated and forwarded to Ofcom and Channel 4, who commissioned and broadcast the programme.

In our focus groups, the theme of the media and how influential representations impact hate speech and hate crime proved to be a persistent theme:

I think the media plays an important and considerable role in the constructing of the social image of Travellers in the public domain. This dictates how the majority of the public view and ultimately treat Travellers, the Channel 4 documentary will likely follow with a spike in anti-Traveller hate crime

Irish Traveller, female, 21–30 years

A non-GTR community member working for an NGO explained the contextual relationship she has witnessed in the immediate aftermath of the Dispatches programme and also the failure of authorities to respond to such hate speech:

■ *Well, there are over twice as many reports [to the hate crime reporting service] as the month before and that's in two weeks. The good news is, many are from non-GRT people complaining about the Dispatches programme and how racist they found it, but then on the other hand, you have a lot of people on Twitter and Facebook and the Mail Online who just feel now that they've been given licence to say whatever they want, and they're trolling because a lot of the time, they're not showing their identities, which is such a bugbear.*

So, I actually believe I'm seeing a repetition – the same reporters who seemed to go looking for Traveller stories to sensationalise. I just feel that, when you can't get to the troll, we should be able to get to the reporter that allowed that troll to make that comment, or to the Mail Online itself.

Because I had a very long conversation on Saturday with a police officer from the Met, and he was saying, 'Oh, well, you know, there's not much we can do because they change their [Twitter] handle to something else and then they're just spewing out the same hate again' but I said, 'Well then, why can't we go for the publications that aren't moderating when they say they are moderating? I mean, there's a horrendous one on Twitter today that I haven't even included because I just did up until 30th April about 'Hitler had the right idea'. That's been allowed on Twitter. As far as the hate incidents that are coming in, it's just a feeding frenzy on what was allowed to be said on the Dispatches programme ■

Non-GTR community member, employed by an NGO, female, 51–60 years

In total, this subject of the role of the media – and associated social media – and how these platforms can exacerbate hate crime and hate speech excited the most comment both in relation to focus groups/interviews and across survey responses.

Other comments from participants who emphasised this theme included:

■ *Whenever GRT people are in the media – whether for positive or negative reasons – it prompts an avalanche of hate comments. In particular, the way local papers report on encampments, with very little moderation on comments and clickbait titles on social media feed it like a frenzy* ■

Half Roma, half Irish Traveller, self-identified as 'other', gender unspecified, 21-30 years

■ *Any time there has been a programme about us, the next week it's just a case of reporting people for online hatred ... Since C4's Dispatches programme I was reporting up 20 different things a day. Its beyond. Britain is not a well-adjusted country, we have been here for years, fought your wars, paid your taxes, you be spit on in the streets or abused online? It's disgusting the gorgja community should be ashamed of themselves* ■

Romani, activist, female, over 60 years

■ *I think that it is highly driven by the media. Sometimes, by the emotive language that's used within the articles and the headlines and the way they sensationalise things, and I think it just lays open the comment sections on the bottom of a lot of online media is- you can see it's driven by the headlines and then it's fed on. So you'll find one racist comment and then, from that, another poster will feed on that. It then begins to snowball* ■

Non-community member, White British, 21-30, working for an NGO, female, focus group

Overall, 71 out of 88 respondents to the survey across all demographics, genders, ages, ethnicities and roles highlighted and added comments in relation to both media and political figures 'stirring up' hostile reporting, attitudes and discourse, with several respondents

reflecting on the fact that if public figures were able to make derogatory comments with apparent impunity, which would have been condemned if utilised against visible minority groups, then an air of respectability and authority was imputed to such comments.

Political influences were highlighted by a number of respondents as significant in creating spikes in incidents in hate speech and hate. This is virtually another study in itself, but both in a number

of comments received within the survey and in particular within the focus groups in which activists, change makers and participants discuss the impact on media on hate crime and hate speech, there was a strong emphasis on the responsibility and role of political figures.

Typical statements from participants asked to reflect upon drivers of hate speech and hate crime included:

- **Media reports, High profile evictions. Planning permission notices in the press, political issues/elections. TV programmes. MBFGW [My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding television programme] has done so much damage to Travelling communities it's unbelievable!**

New Traveller, female, 41–50 years

- **Maybe media business is guilty, when they show us in the negative light. But also in times like now (COVID-19 pandemic), Roma are most vulnerable, and police and the public are reinforced to treat us bad**

Roma, male, 51–60 years

- **Travellers being used as a political football during elections**

Irish Traveller, female, age unstated

- **Within the Roma community, I have to say that many of us try to hide our identity. Many Roma people do not want to say that they are Roma. Instead, they say, 'I am Romanian ... Bulgarian', anything**

else, just because of the discrimination which is happening around the Roma community. When a Roma is attacked, through media, they'll say, 'A Roma whom I don't know'. Many Roma would not jump, you know, to defend him because they don't want to be seen as Roma because they don't want to be discriminated as well ... because of Brexit, migrant people are seen as a threat

Roma, female, 21–30 years

- **Media reporting of unauthorised encampments, Gypsy funerals, alleged offences. Television programmes ie: Gypsies Next Door, and the one about building a mansion in Europe whilst on benefits from UK. Politician's statements in Parliamentary debates regarding GRT community**

Romani Gypsy, working with NGO/activist, female, over 60 years

- **TV shows, media – for example the murder of the police officer near a site provoked people to instantly give a rise in hate crime. They do not think in terms of individuals, common misconception that we have to explain ourselves to residents of communities. Newspapers, particularly right wing ones, The Sun, the Daily Mail, sites on Facebook such as 'Ladbible' etc**

Welsh Gypsy, male, 21–30 years

- **Particularly when political rhetoric gives people permission to make hateful comments with impunity**

White Irish respondent, female, employed by an NGO, 51–60 years

- **Local media reporting, politicians both local and national making statements and using inappropriate language**

White British, statutory housing and public sector roles, substantive amount of career focused on specialist GTR liaison/support roles, male, over 60 years

► **Media. Politicians who use GRT peoples as a political football or moral panic button in order to harvest nimby votes** ◀

Romani Gypsy, male, 41–50 years

► **We’ve had a couple of incidents with [an MP] ... especially around the last election time. He put a lot of leaflets out that weren’t GRT-friendly... he was on social media asking people to complain. So, he wouldn’t inform them of their right to complain, his language wasn’t passive. It wasn’t instructional. He was actively encouraging people to make complaints so that there were enough to perform an eviction. I think he needs to be held accountable for that. That’s not his role. His role is to instruct his constituents, his role is to maybe support and assist. His role is not to egg on and encourage, and basically instruct his constituents to form a hate group, effectively, and complain** ◀

Romani Gypsy, community member, activist, female, 41–50 years

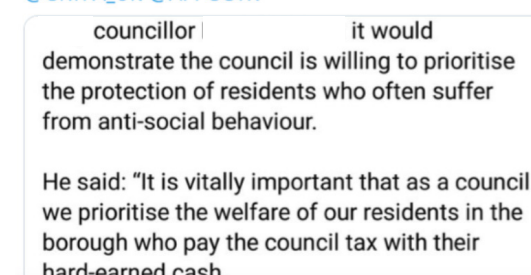
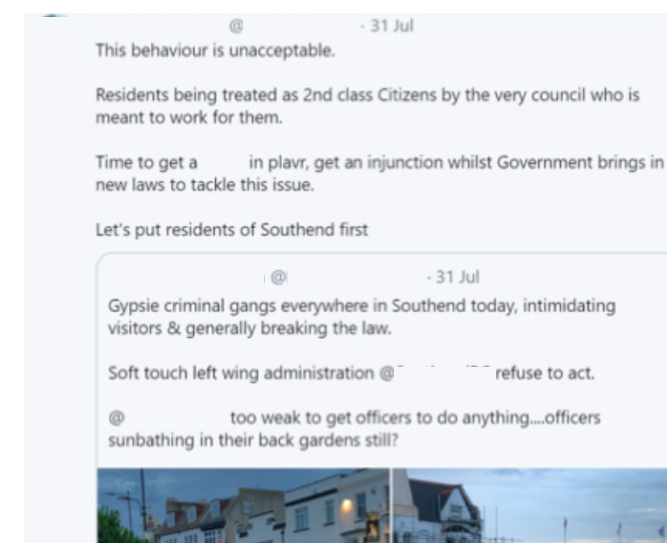
Comments from an MP in the ‘Dispatches programme’ were also reflected upon by some participants (and in Twitter debates) as being unhelpful when seeking to change the narrative and encourage awareness of the standing of GTR communities as members of the wider public, holders of multiple roles in society and constituents in the body politic:

► **When the media is doing it, there are high profile people up there, they saw an MP on that programme [Channel 4 Dispatches] saying that Travellers were like the Taliban and compared the sites to Afghanistan. So, why shouldn’t they be able to do it?** ◀

Romani Gypsy, female, 51—60 years, focus group participant

Political rhetoric around the issue of roadside encampments, the development of new sites and discussion of ‘anti-social behaviour’ has, respondents note, often served to inflate local feelings, and commentary within Twitter, Facebook and ‘under the line’ discussions around local media and newsprint articles. Thus for example, our attention was drawn by correspondents to examples such as the following:

'They c* all over the place and p*** over the field': Councillor's rant about gypsies (says the new man in charge of allocating traveller sites)**



councillor it would demonstrate the council is willing to prioritise the protection of residents who often suffer from anti-social behaviour. He said: "It is vitally important that as a council we prioritise the welfare of our residents in the borough who pay the council tax with their hard-earned cash.

"It is simply not fair for them to suffer anti-social or criminal behaviour that arises when people set up an unauthorised encampment. "This order will give the council their vital powers to tackle these issues whilst it gathers evidence to apply for a borough wide injunction."

The [redacted] have been calling for a borough-wide injunction - a blanket ban on travellers who set up illegally - that can be enforced by the police.

The theme of roadside encampments and applications for development of new Gypsy/ Traveller sites were also the subject of considerable comment by respondents/participants in the survey, interviews and focus groups:

► **Unauthorised encampments is [cause] a huge spike [in hostile reporting/hate speech]. Anyone that’s still nomadic and living on the road is a huge, huge spike. I think they are hugely at risk of being a victim of hate crime and hate speech every day, every minute. The minute they pull onto a piece of land it starts, whether it’s on social media, community pages, and then a newspaper, and then it goes**

from there. It depends how high scale it gets, but most definitely the minute they pull onto any piece of land then that's it ... When new sites are developed, that's another spike. You can see that. That starts on the community pages, and then the newspapers and national newspapers, and we go from there

'Other', non-community member, NGO staff member, female, 31–40 years

It's ridiculous, isn't it? Because if somebody moves into a new house in the morning, it doesn't make a front headline. It doesn't make headlines. As soon as there is a camp, it doesn't care ... how small it is or where it is, it's reported in the newspaper

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years, interview

Broadcast influences, 'timing' of discourse and impacts on communities

A theme that emerged in several interviews, conversations – for example when planning/recruiting for focus groups – and on Twitter, was the way in programme makers could seemingly 'use' controversy or high viewing figures associated with a programme about GTR communities as a vehicle to drive up revenue. Thus it was noted by several people that in the wake of the 'Dispatches' broadcast in April 2020 and resulting furore, 'a feeding frenzy', several other programmes that had followed similar sensationalist approaches, but had been screened perhaps a year or two previously, were suddenly visible on viewing schedules. This added to the focus on the communities in newspapers, social media and Facebook commentary, and added

to the negative discourse and stereotyping. These include re-screenings of some one-off programmes such as Gypsies on Benefits and Proud. Both focus group and interview participants noted spikes in incidents of hate speech and hate crime following programmes such as My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding, Gypsies on Benefits and Proud, and the more recent Channel 4 Dispatches programme The Truth About Traveller Crime.

Focus group participants commented on how there is a sense of authority in newspaper commentaries associated with or reflecting on broadcasts which increases confidence in the narrative told:

Me personally, if I read something – I know this sounds really stupid because I'm getting it all the time about myself – [but] if I read something in the paper, you get people who say, 'Oh, you don't believe it, it's in the paper', but I think to myself, 'Well, no, someone wouldn't be allowed to print that unless it was right, or somebody wouldn't be allowed to say that publicly unless they had facts or it was right

Romani Gypsy, female, 51–60 years

There's no smoke without fire, so I think a lot of people, once they see even the hint of an allegation, they think there must be, like XX said, some sort of truth behind it. The more powerful and the more authoritative the person speaking, the more it legitimises the hate crime that follows it

Non-community member, NGO worker, female, 21–30 years

An interviewee said:

What was different about Dispatches was that it was a repeatable show, on a repeatable channel, who's meant to be good with diversity and inclusion, and they presented something as absolute fact that wasn't fact. So they pretended – I feel – to present evidence that Gypsy and Traveller communities are more likely to be criminal, and that this was almost an inherently cultural thing. But actually, the evidence they produced was flimsy and weak. So it's that shift from people saying, 'We think Travellers are like this', to, 'We have evidence to prove Travellers are like this', and I don't think it is true

Non-community member, NGO worker, female, 21–30 years

Seemingly bearing out these perceptions, immediately following the Dispatches programme, there was a significant spike in the social media related hate incidents (see Figure 14), as noted by a GATE Herts Hate Crime Support worker:

▀ ***There have been 34 reports in two weeks since the Channel 4 documentary, so it causes a huge spike in hate crime*** ▀

The NGO Friends Families and Travellers also provided information on the impact of the documentary on calls to their helpline, as well as contacts in relation to their complaint to Ofcom:

Statement to the Researchers – provided by Friends Families and Travellers in response to request for information

▀ ***In response to the TV programme “Dispatches: The Truth About Traveller Crime”, 7391 members of the public signed a letter of complaint we created and sent to Ofcom and Channel 4. Many of the complaints came from members of Gypsy and Traveller communities who shared detailed information on how they felt the show would affect their lives and in particular, how it had affected their mental health. In the information they shared, some complainants highlighted that they felt there was a link between high levels of discrimination and high levels of suicide in Gypsy and Traveller communities.***

Sadly, we heard from multiple people who said that they didn’t want to leave their home because of what people would think of them after watching the programme or because of fear of hate crime. We heard from others who reported being brought to tears as a result of being called racist names in the street in the days following the programme. We also heard reports from people who felt it would stop them from socialising and working. Other complaints highlighted that the programme had worsened pre-existing mental health conditions. A number of people highlighted that the programme made them feel scared and afraid. ▀

One interviewee provided evidence of the impact of such television programmes (including repeated screenings in the wake of a ‘popular’ new broadcast that attracts a high audience), further supporting the statements provided by NGO staff on mental health and community relations impacts of negative programming:

▀ ***Well, every time it comes on [repeated screenings of programmes such as MBFGW, or similar programmes] it’s like starting from the beginning again, isn’t it? Every time we say something on the TV, the media or whatever, it’s like we’re reliving the same nightmare. You just get over it, like the Big Fat Gypsy Wedding. It came, we had it.***

I’ve been in the same area for many, many years. I know a lot of the people, my children have been to school all the way through, so I know a lot of the people personally. When Big Fat Gypsy Wedding came on, it was like I was alienated in my own area. It was just completely different. Even now, I know about racism – all my life, I’ve grown up with it, but I didn’t realise how much it would impact because I’ve been in the community and known people and their children personally from the schools and things, how much it would have impacted on me and my family. Because they knew we were Gypsies ... they’ve known me and my family for nearly over – well, my son’s coming 21 years old, so they’ve known us for that long, and it was a shock in itself.

Then it [broadcasting of the programme and impact of the series] went away, and I started trusting people in my area again, but then something else comes on and then it’s back to square one almost as if you’re – as much as they dislike you, you start disliking them because the people that you know personally, and you talk to and you see every day are different people than what you actually thought they were, so then you get it on your own back thinking to yourself, ‘You know what? You weren’t as nice as I thought you were’. That’s the way it impacts me when these programmes come on anyway ▀

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years

Social media responses to broadcast programmes

It was also commented (general agreement from participants in the focus group on ‘media’) that the ways in which social media such as Twitter are operationalised can lead to greatly increased pressures on individuals which in turn can cause significant mental health damage as ‘Twitter mobs’ can attack or ‘target’ someone for perhaps entering into a debate or challenging language or perceptions against their community:

► ***What I was going to say about the online hate crime, I’ve seen, in the last couple of weeks, where people used to comment against whole communities, they used to say, ‘Oh, Gypsies this or Travellers this’, they’re now beginning to target individuals ... I’ve seen a young Traveller man was targeted. They went on his page and targeted him, and it’s happened to a few people. So, they’re not doing it to just the whole community anymore, they’re searching out for people to do it to*** ◀

Irish Traveller, female

► ***If you look at some of the high-profile GRT such as John Connors and Martin [Ward] the comedian ... they’ve just recently put their head above the pulpit, made videos, and the abuse that they have received personally is staggering. I mean, the one to John Connors, sort of, it was just – I can’t even repeat it. It was just appalling. We all saw it, but I just wanted to make that point*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years

► ***Every time somebody goes on Twitter and more people, more Travellers are actually getting involved and answering back, which whether that’s a good thing or not, it leaves them open to being targeted. But they are doing it*** ◀

Irish Traveller, female, focus group participant

► ***Well, a lot of them will tell you that it’s only since Gypsies and Travellers engaging with media and speaking to media that they’ve had it so bad. They’ve always been discriminated against but never so blatantly on social media. Or maybe it’s because we can see it more now, but they feel it’s never been this bad. It’s like a witch hunt*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, female, focus group participant

Despite these concerns, Friends Families and Travellers reported that following the Dispatches programme, their webpage hosting a complaint form that could be downloaded and completed to complain to Ofcom about the programme received more views in a single day than any page previously in the history of the website. Also notable was significant number of complaints from the wider general public about the programme.

► ***I noticed that there are a lot of positive comments [on Facebook, Twitter and to their website]. And many that are coming in from non-GRT people especially, calling people to task for what they’re saying. I didn’t notice that earlier, or as much. There’ll always be the lone voice but there are a lot more people coming out and calling people on what they’re saying*** ◀

Interview with Friends Families and Travellers staff member

► ***On the positive stuff, I was going to say, especially with it being a bit more common [discussion on GTR issues] in the settled community, I’ve definitely noticed that in my own personal circles, especially in left-wing groups, there have been a number of articles written by members of the GRT community and they’ve really caught on. I’ve been in groups with friends where they’ve been shared and things, so I think that’s really, really interesting. I think there are quite a lot of groups on the left who’ve not really ever thought that much about the GRT community, suddenly starting to think a lot more about it because of the proposals for criminalisation and that kind of thing*** ◀

Focus group participant, non-community member, employed by NGO, female, 21–30 years

Negative use of visual imagery

A theme that emerged during the media focus group, and was also alluded to in other interviews, was how broadcast and print media use very specific non-verbal imagery used to create bias or influence tone of communication. It was suggested by participants that the creation of such tropes then acts as a visual ‘nudge’ to people viewing or reading about GTR communities, further feeding into the negative perceptions (see also for an academic text reflecting on these issues: Richardson & O’Neill, 2012; Tremlett, 2017):

▀ *The pictures that are put on articles. The article could very well be not that biased, but then you have a picture at the top that has a very, very biased message in it. I think that that just constantly, subconsciously tells the settled community that all Travellers look a certain way or they’re doing certain things* ▀

Irish Traveller, Social Changemaker, female, 21–30 years, media focus group

▀ *I’ve read comments calling for gas cylinders to be put through caravans [in response to images posted in print articles]. I’ve read comments that Hitler had the right idea. I’ve heard references, read references to define ‘The Solution’ more times than I care to imagine. And I think it’s quite common* ▀

Romani Gypsy, female, 21–30 years, focus group

Similarly, it was commented on by a focus group participant that images can ‘go viral’ in relation to spreading of and ‘legitimizing’ behaviours in local areas:

▀ *Since Dispatches was shown, on the Facebook page. It’s gone from one county to another in their own little groups on local Facebook pages. Now, other counties are taking up what Windlesham are doing, putting their signs up, ‘No Gypsies welcome, no Travellers welcome’*

That’s even before they [nomadic Travellers] get into a village or a county. Obviously, a lot of the Dispatches comments are used and have been raised in this local Facebook page. For instance, their profile picture was of caravans, police. That was their community page. And a lot of comments and Dispatches pictures put on there ▀

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years

The following image which shows a sign installed by a member of the public and caused distress to local community members in the Poole area, was shown by The Traveller Movement on Twitter:



Hate speech, hate crime and bullying in the educational context

Although this research is not explicitly focused on the issue of bullying and racism in educational contexts, which has been the subject of considerable attention in relation to GTR children's wellbeing and educational outcomes (e.g. The Traveller Movement, 2016c ; WEC, 2019, Chapter 5; Cemlyn et al., 2009; Myers & Bhopal, 2009), as evidenced in a number of

comments that discussed when and how hate speech/crime is experienced, there is a clear link between 'normalised' negative attitudes towards GTR communities, bullying in schools and other educational contexts. Indeed, this can follow through to apprenticeships and employment as well.

▀ ***Like you don't have to go to a pub that won't serve you every day. You do have to go to [training college] where people who make those comments about you are every day though, and usually you're just told to suck it up and get on with it which can be harder than those people think. it puts you on edge in your place of work ... 24/7, like you never know when it's going to happen again and can never let your guard down*** ▀

Survey respondent, 'Other' half-Traveller, half-Roma, no gender stated, 21–30 years

Thus we heard in interviews and also in survey responses that (particularly for young men) where gendered expectations exist in relation to 'standing up for yourself', there can be a vicious cycle set up where taunting or name calling leads to physical

fight, school exclusions (Traveller Movement, 2016c) and a downward spiral of disengagement from education, sometimes obtaining 'a reputation', or even criminal convictions for fighting:

▀ ***It is often the underlying reason, e.g. a young male is affected by bullying so leaves school early – no qualifications so ends up with intermittent work, affecting his standing in the community; he may get involved in low level crime to earn some money and get sent to prison, or get into drugs and alcohol to self-medicate his struggle with self-worth and his position in the community*** ▀

'Other' Irish heritage, community worker in NGO, female, aged 51–60

▀ ***Weekly I would be in fights. I would fight them there on the spot, because I wouldn't back down. When they [teachers] asked 'Why***

did you jump across the classroom and throw a chair at that boy?' I said, 'Because he called me a dirty so-and-so'. They would laugh. This is education 15 years ago, and I don't know if it's changed now. My experience is that I had that on a daily basis for 10 to 15 years to the point that, when I left school, I decided that if I'm going to college or university, I'm not going to acknowledge who I am. I'd had it beaten out of me, literally beaten out of me to the point where I could not acknowledge [who I was] ... ▀

Half-Showman, half-Romani, male, 31–40 years

More broadly, GTR children continue to have the poorest educational outcomes of all ethnic minority groups as they often leave school earlier than other ethnic groups, to some extent this has been historically because formal education has not been a priority for families, often resulting in teachers and education authorities having low expectations of GTR children (WEC, 2019). However, for many GTR children, early removal from school (whether home schooled or not) can be attributed to parents seeking to remove children from the impacts of discrimination and bullying.

School bullying was highlighted by 78% of our survey respondents as one of the most common forms of hate speech/crime experiences. This was noted as an ongoing issue by participants of all ages and in particular all ethnic GTR communities, sadly demonstrating little intergenerational change and continuing discrimination within schools.

As noted in the discussion on methodologies, the pandemic restrictions prevented our planned school workshops taking place, which would have ensured that the voices of children and young people could still be represented in this report. Friends Families and Travellers and the Anti-Bullying Alliance have very kindly provided some information from focus groups they undertook earlier in 2020 as part of a project aimed at preventing bullying of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children. Although this report is as yet not in the public domain, there is a remarkable degree of synergy in their conversations with children and young people to our own findings where adults discuss school experience, illustrating continuity of negative experiences of GTR community members inter-generationally. One young person who took part in their research highlighted the fact that there is a widespread perception that:

▀ ***Racial slurs against Gypsies aren't dealt with in the same way as other racial groups. It's seen as a big deal for other racial groups but not for us*** ▀

Young GTR person, gender/ethnicity unspecified

A direct linkage was made by a number of survey respondents, interviewees and focus group participants between the impacts of TV programmes and media representations of GTR communities, bullying in schools and associated negative mental health outcomes.

► ***Funnily enough, in that school it was actually the head who started the bullying, because she told my daughter to get the diamond clip from her hair, saying ‘This is not the ‘Big Fat Gypsy Wedding’ And then it escalated from there. The other children got to hear, ‘Really? You’re a Traveller’. And that’s how it escalated*** ◀

Irish Traveller, female, 41–50 years, interview

► ***She went to school, my eldest one went to school around the My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding time and they had the ‘Bigger. Fatter. Gypsier’ posters, and she used to have to pass them every day. She’d run past and she’d get so much discrimination. They asked her why she was in school, she should be home scrubbing. How come she’s not married, she’s nearly 15. She should be waiting to get married now. So the press and everything didn’t help the children*** ◀

Traveller, female, 41–50 years, interview

► ***My 12-year-old daughter don’t even admit what she is in school, how bad is that?*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, female, 31–40 years, survey respondent

► ***These programmes were never about fair representation and unbiased journalism, they were about viewing numbers and reinforcing negative public perceptions of Travellers as criminals or caricatures for their own humour. There was little thought or consideration for the impact that this would have on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, particularly children and young people who already experience high levels of bullying in education. It is likely***

that this will have a negative impact on Travellers who are seeking employment, particularly post pandemic when jobs may already be difficult to get. These shows provide further justification for people’s prejudices ◀

Non-community member, female, NGO staff member, 21–30 years, interview

► ***It’s so bad. My 14-year-old daughter said to me, ‘Mummy, I’m so happy I’m not in school now due to the Corona and Dispatches... She felt that this is good, that the coronavirus is on at this time, because if not, she’d be in school and would have to put up with all the consequences of this programme*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, female, 31–40 years, focus group

► ***We heard from a lot of people about, ‘Thank God our kids aren’t in school tomorrow, because we would just be so fearful’. They know that if kids go out, then this is the result of it. And they’ve seen it before, and they know that they might see it again. So I think to me, that speaks volumes about the tangible impact; people know that discrimination has on their lives*** ◀

Non-community member, NGO staff member, female, 31–40 years, interview

The significance of the impact of sensationalist programmes (linking to the discussions on mental health) is highlighted by one interviewee’s example of a young man’s suicide attempt that his family and community attribute to being a direct result of the toxic impact of the Dispatches programme:

Case study – Suicide Attempt – attributed to viewing the Dispatches programme

► ***That one that I spoke about was definitely directly because of that [Dispatches programme] ... Something came up on the programme and it brought back something for him. It brought back something for him that he couldn’t handle, and he slashed his wrists that night. He just didn’t want to live any more.***

That was a direct [cause] – and how many times is that programme going to be shown again... That boy now has to have plastic surgery. He has to keep going back there [to the hospital]. But every time that programme comes on, if he watches it – he shouldn't watch it anyway. But if he watches it, that'll be another trigger for him ■

Irish Traveller, Senior Activist/Changemaker, female

Other comments from the media focus group participants and interviewees highlight the intergenerational and long-term impact of negative media representations of their communities and also relationships with neighbours, peers and colleagues, suggesting cross-generational impacts. The participant below shared a conversation with her daughter (pertaining to the Big Fat Gypsy Wedding series some years ago) that illustrates the impacts for young people:

■ *It has a huge impact and I think it's a lifelong impact. When you have children saying that they don't want to go to school, they don't want to go back to school because of programmes like this, you have young men slashing their wrists on the night of the programme, you have women being abused inside supermarkets, spat on [citing reports made to Social Changemakers in the wake of the recent media focus on GTR communities], it has to impact on you... even if the children don't understand it, they can feel that their mothers, their fathers are feeling ... It goes over onto them, so they're being impacted from an early, young age. I've seen a lot of stuff going on in the last couple of weeks where people were really angry, and they were taking it out on other people* ■

Community member, female, focus group participant

■ *Being called racist names in the street in the days following the programme. We also heard reports from people who felt it would stop them from socialising and working. Other complaints*

highlighted that the programme had worsened pre-existing mental health conditions. A number of people highlighted that the programme made them feel scared and afraid ■

Social Changemaker, Community Member, Female, focus group participant

The findings from survey responses, interviews and focus groups, as well as information shared by NGOs such as Friends Family and Travellers and the Traveller Movement, and indeed data in published reports such as the WEC (2019), clearly indicate that feelings of exclusion, not belonging and 'othering' begin for GTR community members in childhood in schools. Focus group and interview participants held strong views stressing the need for curriculum reform to include an embedded recognition of GTR history and cultural heritage, not just tokenistic inclusion during GTR history month¹¹ (celebrated in some but not all

schools in June each year), a theme which also emerged in recommendations provided by survey respondents.

There was an emphasis placed by a number of our respondents on the need for a fully inclusive approach from schools¹² ranging from awareness of and challenges to bullying, to pastoral care and curriculum. This emphasis on focused educational experiences as a way of encouraging positive discourse and respect, awareness of culture and reducing bullying, are summarised here by one interviewee:

■ *Just imagine being a kid and going to school, 'Oh, this is Indian food, this is so-and-so food'. 'What about my food? What about my culture? What about my history? Where am I made to feel appreciated?' If I was a little kid and they started talking about horses and trailers and wagons, I'd have been like, 'Oh, Dad, Mum, let's get them all in'. I would've loved it. I would've stood up and talked about it, because I would've been appreciated and respected, but that never happened. It was always me sitting there listening to everyone else's story. They've done this, they've done that, and thinking, 'Why am I not appreciated? What's wrong with me?' You go one way or the other a lot of the time. You either hide it, or sometimes you're in the middle and you're between both* ■

Romani, female, 41–50 years

¹¹ For information on Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month see further: <https://travellermovement.org.uk/campaigns/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-history-month> and <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/heritage/celebrating-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-history-month/>

¹² Indeed, the theme of invisibility in the curricula, misrecognition or on occasion bullying in Higher and Further education and also has also emerged in other research and empowerment contexts see for example, the background briefing and report of a Roundtable on GTR communities in Higher Education, involving a substantial number of GTR graduates and NGOs (Greenfields, 2019)

Mental health, wellbeing, and exclusion

One of the core objectives of this research was to see if it is possible to establish a link between experiences of hate crime and mental health and wellbeing; suicide and para-suicide. As noted above As noted in the literature review and introduction to this report, there are no clear statistics on suicide amongst Gypsy, Traveller and Roma populations in the UK and at present no way of establishing this information, despite the persistent anecdotal evidence of over-representation of the communities in such deaths, linked at times with suggestions from bereaved family members that alongside other identifiable markers of suicide risk, persistent exclusion or racist incidents may have ‘been the straw which broke the camel’s back’ for someone who has perhaps been struggling with their mental health for some time.

A considerable number of research studies that focus on risk factors for suicide highlight prior existing mental illness as a precursor for such attempts/successfully taking one’s own life. This however disregards the fact that nationally, under 30% of people who die by suicide were seen by mental health services in the last year of their lives (National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness, 2016). As such, although existing mental illness may offer an important explanatory category, it is critically important to take account of other factors.

To this end, we would argue strongly that our findings add a highly nuanced and persuasive layer of evidence to the suggestion both that Gypsies and Travellers are more likely than not to be over-represented in figures for those taking their own lives, and also that hate speech/hate crime are an exacerbating factor precipitating suicide in these populations.

Our stance is supported by the overwhelming evidence on wide-ranging social exclusion of the GTR populations (poverty and exclusion are themselves identified as risk factors for mental illness and suicide; Samaritans, 2017), as well as stark findings from Irish studies into the over-representation of Travellers in suicide statistics (Walker, 2008; All Ireland Traveller Health Study Team, 2010), and Rogers’ (2016) research that highlighted unresolved grief, lack of support from statutory or specialist wellbeing services, an emphasis on ‘stoicism’ and ‘getting on with things’ in the face of devastating situations.

In addition to the findings from this study, we argue that our evidence is linked closely to the findings on the impact of hate crime on psychological wellness (see literature review, and in particular findings from Wallace et al. (2016) on the detrimental effect of experiencing even one racist incident). Participants in this study have repeatedly stressed the persistent grinding and demoralising effect of hate crime/hate speech and discriminatory representations of their communities on their lives. Accordingly, we argue that our data further reinforces previous evidence for other populations, that being a victim of hate crime has a greater impact on the emotional wellbeing of victims than non-hate crimes (Hambly et al., 2018; Schweppe et al., 2018) with potentially devastating effects which may be linked to and exacerbate the risk of suicide (APPG Hate Crime, 2019, p.32; Dearden, 2019; Polanco, 2018).

Indeed, a Home Office review of the impacts of hate crime identifies the pervasive impact of hate crime on victim’s mental health, with behavioural modification a common strategy used to disguise personal characteristics that incite hatred (Hambly et al. 2018). This practice of ‘behaviour modification’ was profoundly

evident within this study’s findings. The inescapable fact is that hate incidents start in childhood, and in response GTR children typically hide their ascription to prevent school bullying, with such responses often becoming a lifelong protective strategy, or in the alternative ‘fighting’ (as young men in particular were noted to do¹³) to obtain a measure of respect or to at least be ‘left alone’ by bullies:

■ ***I think men in character are completely different to a woman. With men it’s about, as soon as you walk into a room someone knows who you are and what you are, you’ve got to prove yourself. I had it in the schools, I had it in the pubs. To an extent, I’ve kind of had it down the football to a point, which is a bit strange when you walk into a pub and someone goes, ‘He’s a Traveller’ All of a sudden someone goes, ‘Right, he’s going to want a row’. It’s not like that at all. I’ve had to completely neutralise myself and I just have to walk away from it. Otherwise, if I kept going the way I was at school, I’d have been inside three or four times. I nearly got put inside once before for it. I’m not going to do it again*** ■

Community member, male, 31–40 years, focus group

However, living life hiding one’s identity can have a profound effect on mental health and wellbeing as this example illustrates:

■ ***I’ve noticed withdrawal symptoms within the GRT people. I’ve recently been involved with a family whose son has hung himself as he felt that he didn’t fit in anywhere with society*** ■

Traveller, community member working for NGO, female, focus group

¹³See also ‘physical assault against a pupil’ and ‘disruptive behaviour’ as the primary reasons stated for fixed or permanent exclusion from school, of GTR children in research undertaken by the Traveller Movement in 2016 at page 12. <https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/Never%20Giving%20Up%20On%20Them.pdf>

► *You’ve got two types of people in this room right now, similar age groups. One that will fight and acknowledge who they are and shout it from the rooftops, and one that won’t say, ‘Boo’ to a ghost about it. I don’t know what your experience is, but my experience is that I was ignored, I was fought against and I was beaten out of it, had it beaten out of me to the point where I can’t even be bothered with it anymore. I feel half ashamed to say that, because when I acknowledge Travellers, and I talk to Travellers, I go to things like Hackney Fair and Barnet Fair, it physically brings me to tears. I see things that I saw my Nan used to do, and I saw my aunts used to do. That culture makes me feel things that I feel I’ve had to bottle inside for years and years, and years. It upsets me. It really, really does upset me. It makes me well up at times* ◀

Half-Showman, half-Romani, male, 31–40 years

To contextualise this argument further, Crawford (2016), writing on the over-representation of First Nations people in Canada in suicide statistics identified the following elements (Figure 15) as associated with increased suicide risk for indigenous communities. These figures broadly mirror both statistical findings and risk factors common to Aboriginal peoples in Australia (see further Pridmore et al., 2013; Tait et al., 2018) and also the exacerbated risk for Irish Travellers which appears to be only slightly lower (All Ireland Traveller Health Study Team, 2010).

Whilst Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities cannot be directly equated to indigenous communities who have experienced the impact of colonialism (although Roma populations in Eastern Europe have experienced the legacy of slavery lasting up until the 19th Century¹⁴), we would argue that cultural trauma, loss of autonomy and disruption of traditional ways of life for these communities (see for example, Clark & Greenfields, 2016; Cemlyn et al., 2009; WEC, 2019; Rezmukes et al., 2017) have broad similarities in relation to the impacts on autonomy, well-being, social inclusion, and hence enhanced suicide risk.

¹⁴See for example Covinnus (undated) <https://covinnus.com/history-roma-people-romania/#:~:text=Roma%20belonging%20to%20landowners%20%28boyars%29.%20The%20Romanian%20principalities,seen%20as%20the%20private%20property%20of%20the%20owner> Which emphasises that in the former Romanian ruled territories Roma were enslaved from at least the 15th Century until the mid 19th Century, and for a scholarly discussion: Matras, Y (2014) I Met Lucky People: The Story of the Romani Gypsies; Taylor, B (2014) Another Darkness, Another Dawn: A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

Figure 15. Structural issues identified with increased suicide rates for Indigenous/First Nation peoples in Canada (Crawford, 2016)

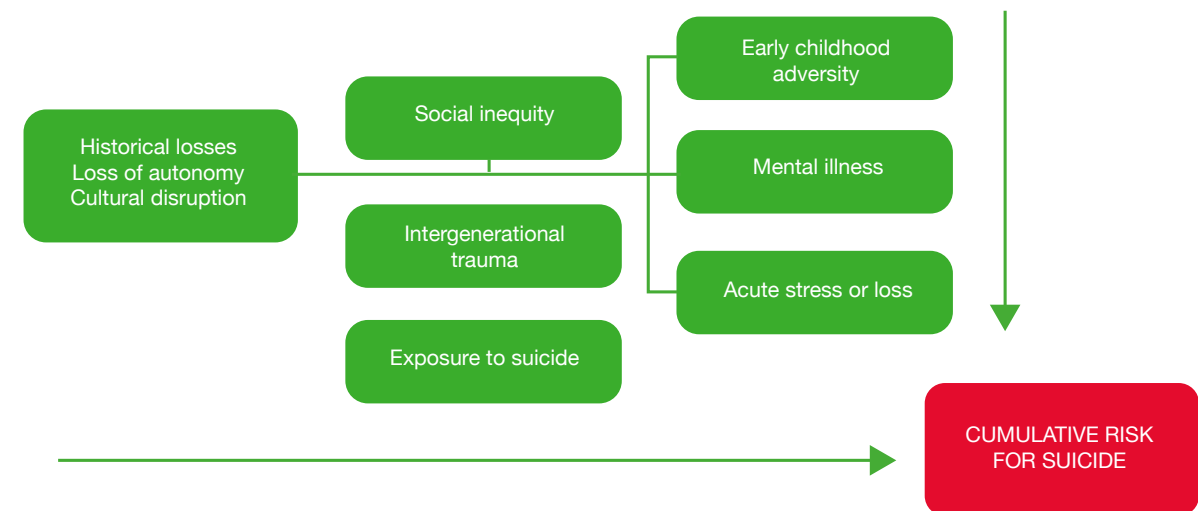


Image reproduced from Crawford (2016)

Accordingly – whilst acknowledging that the data which follows and which is drawn from our survey and interview/focus group findings, is by definition unable to establish precision causation or prevalence of death by suicide amongst GTR community members – we argue, that based on Irish literature on Traveller suicide rates, broader research presented in this report, and the consistent statements made by participants, that

there is a highly presumptive correlation between the experiences of exclusion, discrimination, being a victim of hate crime or hate speech; poor mental health and suicide amongst GTR populations.

Whilst we do not attempt to argue that these are the only factors implicated in GTR suicide and stress as one survey respondent stated:

► *Whilst nearly all Travellers will have experienced hate crime or hate speech, I don’t think we can necessarily link hate crime as a causation of suicide. We don’t know this information. Additionally, there are both external and internal issues such as shaming, expectations etc which contribute greatly to mental health and suicide* ◀

Female, Irish Traveller 21–30 years

Our findings do, however, indicate that there is a clear need for additional more in-depth research which goes beyond this small pilot study, and which utilises psychological research methods to examine this issue more forensically. Further, there is a clear need for additional support, monitoring and appropriate interventions to reduce the level

of despair articulated by respondents. The following findings explore in depth explore the relationship between poor mental health, suicide and familial articulations of trigger events or the build up of a long sequence, which is associated with the poor mental health and/or preventable deaths of GTR community members.

The Impact of hate speech/hate incidents on Gypsy, Traveller and Roma wellbeing

As discussed, participants in interviews and focus groups clearly identified negative impacts on a sense of social inclusion and wellbeing occasioned by high levels of exposure to negative discourse and hate speech. We asked our survey participants if they were able to identify the most common reactions of GTR community members to experiencing hate speech/crime and negative discourse (see Figures 12 and 13 for the percentage of respondents who indicated they could clearly identify increases in hate incidents related to particular events or broadcasts).

Sixty-eight out of 88 respondents (77%) provided additional comments which, whilst often overlapping, can essentially be broken down into the following categories:

- Mental health impacts: depression/anxiety
- Withdrawal from, anger and suspicion of 'mainstream' society
- Learning to 'live with it'
- 'Self-medication'/harmful behaviours/ (emphasis on masculinities)

Respondents to the survey (utilising the free-text space available) replied in such large numbers and with such rich detail on these broad themes that we are only able to provide exemplar quotations under these broad themes to enable the voices of participants to be heard. Some respondents spoke more generally about how they are perceived of as criminals, or spoke of 'hiding' their ethnicity:

► ***Of course it causes depression! Of course it causes anxiety. Your very right to live gets questioned regularly, your goodness, your humanity. You spend your life hiding a huge part of you. As a 'professional', I have to be careful not to speak too energetically, not to gesture with my hands. Not to get too annoyed when I face racism. Because it's automatically used against me. I cannot tell you how tired I feel after a meeting with statutory organisation, even those who don't think they have negative opinions, just come out with ridiculous things! I've not come out of a meeting yet with organisations that are not GT [supportive] where I don't get at least one wave of anger that I have to mask!*** ◀

Romani Gypsy Health/Social professional does not disclose ethnicity in professional life, female, 31–40 years

► ***Non-Travellers believe the negative image the media bestows upon the GRT community is fact, e.g. they are all thieves/don't pay tax/are dirty. Non- Travellers then think if the media says this then it is fine for them to say the same (even if they have never met a member of the community). Folk devils and moral panics*** ◀

Scottish Traveller, gender not stated, 41–50 years

► ***I speak for myself and family in saying work gets harder, we get asked to explain as a community a single person's actions, which never happens to White British or Black people or other ethnicities. Framing is rampant, in Wales for example where my family are from, on more than ten occasions when we had only pulled up near a stopping place for near a day we were asked to move on and blamed for robberies in the area [that had taken place] for over a week earlier*** ◀

Welsh Romani, male, 21–30 years

The overwhelming majority of responses fell under the four major theme themes listed above, which were also prominent in interviews and focus groups when participants were asked to reflect on the likely impacts of hate speech/hate crime on members of their communities.

In the sections which follow, comments from interviews/focus group are included with comments made by survey respondents as direct quotations under those four primary sub-headings.

Before presenting the major themes it is important to note that there is little variation in terms of identification of harmful impacts by ethnicity of GTR respondents. These concepts were strongly

highlighted by all groups other than Boaters/New Travellers; although they reflected in some cases on the sense of being treated as 'untrustworthy' and gossiped about/looked down or subject to discrimination in access to some services as a result of stereotypes, they were significantly less likely to comment on long-term detrimental mental health impacts occasioned by racism/hate crime. This may suggest that potentially other protective mechanisms exist for these groups, and also that the lack of 'ethnicity'-based hate crime/speech and discrimination, whilst painful, does not cause the deep-rooted damage associated with hostility resulting from an immutable characteristic/heritage.

Boaters and New Travellers (a differing experience of harassment and hate speech)

In contrast, these groups (Boaters/New Traveller respondents) were also least likely to reflect on the protective factors available to them of being able to withdrawn into their family/ethnic units (see Rogers, 2016 for a discussion on this protective/resilience strategy) when facing abuse. In one interview with a Boater, the point was made very clearly that there is still a very strong sense of community and support available to those living along canals even without a registered mooring:

► ***People who I knew from my community, who were mooring down there, when they were on the river, in the summer – continuous cruisers – and as soon as they were mooring up, they were being approached quite aggressively by certain people in these houses, who were taking photographs of them, sticking cameras in their faces, sticking cameras through their windows, saying, ‘You can’t moor here. You’re not allowed here. This is private. Why don’t you go away?’***

Writing their boat serial numbers down, keeping logs of how long they kept there. If they overstayed by one day, then coming down and knocking on their door and saying, ‘You need to go’. Sometimes, these encounters escalated, and they got quite nasty from the residents’ side. There were one or two residents in particular who were really, really horrific ... [in particular harassment occurred towards Boaters who were permitted by the Canal and River Trust and local authorities to remain at ‘tolerated moorings’ for longer than the standard 14 days as a result of pregnancy and/or health problems]

We [NGO that employed the interviewee] asked boaters to record and to report any encounters that they’d had with the residents. In the end, it got really bad, and I involved the local policeman, Head of Community Engagement, because there was one particular resident, as I say, who was being just absolutely outrageous and harassing people – vigilantes – and shouting and screaming abuse at people who were just living their lives ... so we had to send

the community antisocial behaviour police officers, basically [they] issued her with an ASB [Anti-Social Behaviours Order]. Her husband was, apparently, there when they went round, and he was quite shocked ◀

Boater, employed by NGO supporting GTR communities, 41–50 years

It was also noted by a respondent that New Travellers and Boaters are potentially more likely to experience different outcomes from ethnic GTR communities when reporting or experiencing hate speech/crime:

► ***Differentiated behaviour to reporting hate crimes for New Travellers, Boaters and van dwellers – more likely to report hate crimes, as better educated so have knowledge and skills of how and where to report most effectively and do not have the intergenerational experiences and normalisation of hate crimes experienced by ethnic GTR*** ◀

Other’, NGO support worker, female, 41–50 years

Showmen, Roma and ‘Other’ respondents

To this end, it is noteworthy that ‘ethnic’ GTR – and to some extent although not as markedly – Showpeople – all emphasised the sense of being ‘outside’ of mainstream society; seen as being ‘less worthy’ and not belonging and hence the reaction of wanting to withdraw from a hostile society. Showmen as Occupational Travellers who by definition require licenses to arrive at a location and often presented fairs on a particular circuit for generations, and who are moreover represented by influential Guilds, are not however immune from abuse and negative profiling. Historically there has been a persistent (if considerably less prominent than that experienced by Gypsies and

Travellers) thread of perceptions that Fairs may be associated with ‘trouble’ or criminality, and as our two respondents from the Showman community indicated, they are also subject to hate speech and risk of physical violence as a result of their public facing role.

Roma respondents interestingly in a number of responses reflected on the lesser degree of hate/exclusion in the UK than in their countries of origin, and hence were marginally more likely to display a world-weary pragmatism in relation to their experiences of discrimination.

► *Here in London we do not feel discriminated very much. We are not even known to be Roma. So people treat us equally. But when they know, the attitude sometimes changes. For example, when they see our women, who are dressed traditionally, they hide their purses, watch pockets, cross the streets and try not to look at us. They think we are going to do something bad, just because our women are dressed differently. But in fact we want to go shopping, to go to a bar, to bring our kids to nursery, to have a walk without being judged. We are simple people and want a simple calm life* ◀

Roma, male, 21–30 years, interview

Those who identified as ‘Other’ (which includes support workers and academics working with the community) broadly highlighted the same themes, although were considerably less likely (unless ‘Other’ with mixed ethnic GTR heritage) to refer to ‘fighting back’; negative or damaging behaviours, or rejection of ‘mainstream/gorje’ society. They were, however, more likely to highlight the mental health impacts on victims of hate crime/hate speech.

Unsurprisingly, respondents who reported living with a disability, and most particularly those experiencing mental health disability associated with PTSD, anxiety and depression, commented most strongly on how hate speech/crime impacted mental health; particularly where – as in a number of cases – they had themselves been victims of hate crimes (in some cases, shocking physical attacks) as a result of their ethnicity.

► *I have PTSD due to over 15 physical attacks over 40 years, I don’t go outside where the general public are unless absolutely necessary* ◀

Showman, gender not provided, 51–60 years, survey

The comments that follow in relation to the four key analytical themes

- Health impacts: depression/anxiety/anger
- Withdrawal from, anger and suspicion of ‘mainstream’ society
- Learning to ‘live with it’
- ‘Self-medication’/harmful behaviours/ (emphasis on masculinities)

give a flavour of the statements provided by respondents across all elements of the study (interviews, focus groups and survey).

Depression/anxiety as a response to hate

► *Roma are discriminated, harassed, that’s why they feel very bad. They have low self-esteem and think that we are less than the non-Roma community. That’s why they don’t have the will to become someone, for example grow in career – because we are made to feel useless and unimportant, untouchable* ◀

Roma, female, 51–60 years, survey respondent

► *It makes it hard work to allow yourself to be identified as GRT and brings a sense of insecurity* ◀

Scottish Traveller, female, 31–40 years

► *It’s degrading, it makes you ashamed, also angry, but very depressed* ◀

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years, survey respondent

► *Impacts on mental health, negative stereotyping results in refusal of services* ◀

New Traveller, female, 31–40 years, survey respondent

► *It’s depressing – sometimes even when it’s just abstract comments on social media that aren’t aimed at you or any GRT people you know, it can feel overwhelming to know that there are so many seemingly ordinary people out there who feel that way about people like you and will just chuck slurs and threats around like it means nothing. it can really get stuck in your head. it often makes you not want to let on that you’re GRT yourself when you meet new people because you’ve no way of knowing if they might think the same, no matter how nice they are elsewhere* ◀

‘Other’ half-Roma, half-Irish Traveller, gender unspecified, 21–30 years, survey respondent

► **Fear, bad health mental state** ◀

Romani Gypsy, male, 51–50 years, survey respondent

► **Makes you feel like you're not welcome or wanted, you can't get a fair crack of the whip. Everyone is against you. You just can't win, It's like swimming against the tide, makes you lose hope. You can't pick up work and get fed up and crushed with the sheer weight of it. No wonder so many of us are having trouble with their nerves and doing away with themselves, poor souls** ◀

Showman, female, 51–60 years

► **Huge ... Adds to mental health issues such as anxiety, stress and depression plus feelings of low esteem. Makes people less likely to want to talk to outsiders and this impedes breaking down barriers between communities ... Adds to increase in suicide in Travelling communities** ◀

Boater/Bargee, works for an NGO, female, 41–50 years

► **Especially in the '80s, a lot of Gypsy women and Traveller men were getting electric shock treatment for the smallest of reasons, they're a bit depressed or this, that and the other. They get sectioned, and when I said, 'The smallest of reasons', because nowadays it would be anxiety or a bit of depression. They were being sectioned and given electric shock treatment, and that made them ten times worse** ◀

Romani Gypsy, woman, 21–30 years, focus group – reflecting on institutional racism and family experiences of mental health services increasing distrust of services

► **In some cases I have seen community members even go as far as to internalise the false beliefs outsiders make about our culture** ◀

Scottish Traveller, 21–30 years, survey respondent

Withdrawal/mistrust/anger

► **They are angry of course, they are humiliated and very upset. Often they want to take 'revenge', by thinking on how can he hurt that person who made him suffer, but in the end he can only close himself from others, as he understands that they are many and he is one** ◀

Roma, male, 21–30 years, interview

► **The community draws together, fewer people go out of their locality or socialise outside of their cultural community** ◀

'Other' Irish/British, NGO staff member, female, 51–60 years

► **It becomes a mental strain on parents, for the safety for their children, they pull them from public life** ◀

Romani Gypsy, male, over 60 years, survey respondent

► **Increased crime: both crime against Gypsies but also a 'fuck it why would I listen to the police, they'll harass me anyway?' attitude within GRT community. Settled people know that hate crime against GRT isn't taken seriously so can get away with it. GRT are blamed for all social ills so 'attacked' verbally or physically". [We] aren't welcome** ◀

Romani Gypsy, female, 31–40 years, survey respondent

► **Anger. There is a lot of anger. Settled people are so sly, they make out they want to help, they want to provide better accommodation and stopping sites, then you never hear of that site going ahead. You come through the town again and people go mental for you stopping on the road. Give us a proper permanent pitch then? Gorjas get caravan parks, but we are not allowed on them full stop** ◀

Welsh Gypsy, male, 21–30 years

► ***Reinforced perception of the disregard and discrimination offered to the communities by society*** ◀

Pavee Traveller, male, 51–60 years, survey respondent

► ***Roma suffer even more hate crime after the news pieces are released. I face it very often wherever I go, whenever I meet new people*** ◀

Roma, male, 31–40 years, survey respondent

‘Learning to live with it’

► ***Stoical acceptance that it’s a part of life mostly but it has a cumulative effect on people’s self-esteem and mental health*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, female, 51–60 years, survey respondent

► ***I think most GRT cultures are partly built around coping with such events, and colluding in their normalisation*** ◀

‘Other’, working with community organisation, male over 60 years, survey respondent

► ***Dark humour, of course, we are the ultimate survivor race*** ◀

Welsh Gypsy, male, 21–30 years, survey respondent

► ***Roma just try not to pay attention, ignore. Sometimes I try to fight, convince people that they are wrong and Roma are not bad as they think. But usually it makes a bigger problem*** ◀

Roma, male, 21–30, interview

► ***It can be quite negative in general, I’m not sure that it impacts upon individuals greatly. I think most people are used to it so wouldn’t think on it too much*** ◀

Irish Traveller, female, 21–30 years, survey respondent

‘Self-medication’/harmful behaviours (typically masculine responses)

One focus group exchange between male and female participants from diverse ethnic heritages (Romani Gypsy, Showman, Irish Traveller) spontaneously touched upon the theme of substance use in response to depression, anxiety and experiences of hate crime. There was widespread agreement amongst the participants on the interplay of these elements, particularly impacting young men:

► ***Sometimes it then leads onto mental health, drug abuse and substance abuse and so forth. That’s from, literally, not being protected [from racism]*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, 1st female

► ***In education – not being listened to*** ◀

Male, Showman/Romani mixed heritage

► ***Can I just reframe the drug abuse and the alcohol abuse to self-medication? Can I re-frame that?*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, community member, 2nd female

► ***Take away the word ‘abuse’ and call it what it is. It’s self-medication, because that’s what it is*** ◀

Irish Traveller, community member, female

A number of respondents to the survey and in one-to-one interviews also raised points pertaining to these issues, broadly linked to discussions on masculinities, racism and diminished opportunity (and see later on in relation to discussions on suicide).

► *Depression, lack of employment prospects, low confidence, anger issues, drug and alcohol dependency, suicidal thoughts and feeling hopeless, reclusive behaviour, less likely to ask for help, feeling untrusted, trauma, prison – the impacts are widespread and deep rooted. This is a racial discrimination we have lived with for centuries. The damage is unmeasurable* ■

Romani Gypsy, female 31–40 years, survey respondent

► *[Traveller men], they're not allowed to go out and knock on doors anymore to do garden work or do rubbish clearance. They're not allowed to do that. They're not allowed to carry scrap. They have to have a license for every borough. They can't keep horses anymore. So the boys growing up now have got more time to experiment in drugs and get into crime. And that's when the pressure is on them because they can't do what they're raised to do, and then obviously they have less money, so that's an embarrassment and shame on them* ■

Irish Traveller, female, 41–50 years, interview

► *There's a lot of [risk of] toxic masculinity, trying to prove himself, not only within the culture, but outside the culture as well. I think that's a male thing. I think there's that. The way of life changing ... In all honesty, drugs ... ill-health, and then getting in with the wrong people and getting in with criminals. It's the domino effect* ■

Romani woman, 41–50 years, focus group

► *In the school age when the children are fragile and just forming their personality, hate crime can affect their emotional and mental systems, which can form a difficult adult. Their parents, who also suffered from hate crime, can soothe them and teach to overcome it, but not to fight against, including reporting – the system is built in*

such a way that even the police officers in remote villages and Roma settlements are racist towards Roma. There is no hope for help from them ■

Roma, female, 31–40 years

► *My opinion is, from the age of 16 to 20 that is the key age for male Travellers to either be educated about what's going on, or melt down. Now, in my case, I got to a point by the age of 17, I had an incident, a racism-reported incident and I ended up fighting the fellow. I nearly ended up getting in trouble for it, I nearly got put down for it for a long time. It's wasn't until I had a social services worker who said, 'You need to talk to someone' I spoke to that person and they said, 'You've got this problem because of what's happened in the past' At that point, I learnt to cut it off, move on, forget about it and that's why I am the way I am today* ■

Mixed heritage Showman/Romani, Male, 31–40 years, focus group

Children and young people: mental health

In addition to the generic clusters of discussion, a number of participants also spontaneously reflected on the mental health impacts on children and young people growing up exposed to hostility, linking to the discussion above on educational experiences, harmful behaviours and bullying in school contexts.

► *Children at school. I think they're highly at risk [of negative mental health]* ■

Community member, female, focus group participant

Whilst another noted:

► *I'm absolutely sure that the mental health is damaged already, just because children, in school, young women in the shops, and*

wherever they go, they face this hate crime. For example, I was discriminated in school. I came home and I complained to my mum, she said, 'Don't worry, it happened to me as well, and we shall leave [school]'... So, just because you see the examples of your family we're okay with that, unfortunately. We all got used to it ■

Roma, female, 31–40 years, focus group

- *As soon as they hit secondary school, if they sit down beside another child, if a travelling child sits beside another child, the child will make smelly gestures and get up and move away, and they'll all laugh. It happened to my daughter ... so it's bad* ■

Irish Traveller, female, 41–50 years, interview

The theme of the impact on children attempting to hide cultural identity (as has been reflected upon by a number of participants) or the mismatch between community and school expectations and how this may cause distress or confusion for children, was also highlighted in several interviews and focus groups.

One participant, who took part in an interview, recounted the story of her son's experiences of dealing with bullying through 'fighting back' and the way in which the school responded, which flagged up for her the pressures children may experience in learning to navigate their way through a different set of 'rules':

- *I just want to touch on the bit about the kids and the mental impact. If I can associate it with – it's like having schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is a mental problem, isn't it? And when you think about Gypsy/Traveller children, they are literally schizophrenic because they've got to live two different lives, two different personalities.*

What made me connect the two was ... my son was in school, he's 21 now, when a school teacher called me, the headlady, and she called me and she said about XX... and he was about 5 at the time. Typical

Travelling child, fighting and going sticking up for himself, and she said to me, 'You've got to learn him' she said, 'to become to an adult and speak up'.

In other words, tell tales. And I said, 'But what you've got to understand ... we do the opposite of that. He's not allowed to go and tell tales because it will cause rows at home'. So, if a child says something to him, he's got to sort it out himself'. And she said, 'Well, in school, he's got to be like this, this and this'.

And do you know, it made me realise then how hard it is for the children growing up, that they've got to live two different lives. They've got to live one life at home and they've got to go and live a different life. Yes, as they get older, they've grown into it, so they're schizophrenic. [By the] time they're 12 years old, they're schizophrenic because they've got these 2 different personalities, but when you're talking about a child starting primary school, 5, 6 years old, and they've got to live and they've got to sit down and do as they're told, it's going to have a mental impact. Then everything that progresses from it with the media, then they learn that, 'You know what? People tell lies and I've got live with this'.

They've got to think about a different life, they've got to think about saying things differently, doing things differently. They've got to do the opposite. It's got to be, they're constantly battling with their own mind and their own brains, from an early, early age ■

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years

Similarly, as explored in the discussion on school experiences and bullying, there would appear to be a clear linkage between discrimination, bullying and other negative experiences in educational settings and the themes of (particularly) male spirals of negative behaviours, 'toxic masculinity', substance misuse and becoming involved with the criminal justice system.

Reactions to hate crime/victimisation

Having asked respondents about their perceptions of community responses to experiences of discrimination and hate crime/hate speech in the latter sections of the survey (and interviews), we then moved on to explore specific incidents of behaviours or reactions to such offences, which respondents could either identify in their personal experience, or others they knew who had experienced hate crime or hate speech.

Once more, 77% of respondents to the survey provided additional information in relation to this question with the core themes largely mirroring the themes explored earlier – essentially those of withdrawal, anger, depression, anxiety, or unhelpful coping techniques, such as reliance on alcohol, or substance misuse. A considerable number of respondents also simply indicated that we should

“see earlier answers”; “like I told you”, or provided more in-depth information pertaining to the comments they had given to the general question on typical ‘community responses’.

A new, deeply concerning, and important theme which emerged, however, in addition to the most commonly identified responses, concerns community members self-excluding from seeking help because of fear of discrimination or mistrust of ‘mainstream services’, as well as accounts of relatives self-harming or attempted or successful suicides. To this end, a number of GTR respondents provided deeply personal information about their own experiences of poor mental health, which they link to a life time of racism, discrimination and experiences of hate:

► ***I personally don’t interact with the wider community where I live (VERY conservative) and I don’t go anywhere without my ‘White’ husband. I haven’t worked for 11 years. I’m working to heal the rift I feel, but constant eyes looking for an explanation of whether I’m ‘from round here’ or not are tiring and have worsened with this government and its media. My autism and ADHD is undiagnosed as are my PTSD and Anxiety. There is no point asking White doctors for help. They will only fix you to work in *their* society. My mother committed suicide when I was six because of these issues*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, female, 31–40 years, who grew up in care, separated from her culture after her mother’s death

► ***Young people will show signs of low self-esteem. Most Traveller children have confidence to speak and engage when spoken too, if signs of withdrawal is an indicator of some reason for this. It***

can, in time, lead to a disclosure of discrimination, bullying and people judging them for being dirty low lives of society. Once this is recognised, support into services can be arranged [but] this may not happen first time. Once [a] person is ready it can mean attending service appointments with them ◀

Romani, NGO staff member, no gender stated, over 60 years

► ***I can’t talk to non-GRT about my problems because of [fear of] being targeted as an unfit mother, so bottle everything up*** ◀

Irish Traveller, female, 41–50 years

► ***All of the above plus depression and hopelessness. Feeling trapped and wishing they could ‘go away in a wood somewhere’. Misusing substances, prescription medication and alcohol to self-medicate ... relationship breakdown and increased domestic abuse and family problems*** ◀

Showman, female, 51–60 years

► ***Staying apart from country people. General distress and anger, which can lead to depression*** ◀

Irish Traveller, female, 51–60 years

► ***For me, other GRT people are my safe place, people who I know will never judge me for being GRT because they are too. Sometimes when hate gets too much I can find myself withdrawing from non-GRT friends because it’s hard to know who you can trust. I’ve had people I was friends with who didn’t know I was GRT make racist comments about GRT people in front of me and that just gets stuck in your head and it’s hard to get it out. My ma used to get panic attacks reading comments on local papers and Facebook pages***

even though they weren't about us directly so she doesn't use social media anymore

'Other', European Roma father, Irish Traveller mother, no gender stated, 21–30 years

► *Hang themselves*

Scottish Traveller, female, 21–30 years

► *This [reactions to hate speech/discrimination] happens a lot to people in the Boater community. There's a strong sense of 'us' and 'them'*

Boater, female, 21–30 years

► *They won't engage with services because of bad experiences*

Irish Traveller, works for NGO, female, 31–40

► *You do withdraw and isolate and begin to 'hate' everyone because they hate you anyway*

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years

► *High levels of anxiety and depression within the GTR community relates to many circumstantial factors, which are usually systematic discrimination within services, disproportionate outcomes and access to support than other communities and long-term persecution and racism*

'Other', White British, female, health professional working with community clients, 31–40 years

► *I know quite a few people who have had to be treated for severe anxiety due to the rise in attacks both online and in the streets ... the online hate has given me my own self-doubt and depression as well many others who despair with fighting the same bigots repeatedly. Nothing is done to change your culture, whereas ours is constantly monitored, put down or stolen from*

Welsh Gypsy, male, 21–30 years

► *I think anger and shame, maybe even self-isolation (for kids and youngsters)*

Roma, female, 21–30 years

► *I've noticed withdrawal symptoms within the GRT people. I've recently been involved with a family whose son has hung himself as he felt that he didn't fit in anywhere with society*

Romani Gypsy, working with NGO, female, 51–60 years

Suicide

As outlined within the Introduction and Methodology discussions, the theme of anecdotally high levels of suicide amongst ethnic GTR communities is core to this pilot study. Although no statistics exist in the UK, anecdotally the patterns of suicide (significant disproportionality in suicide rates, younger adults committing suicide – often leaving children), higher rates of male suicide but still over-representation of female suicide) mirror those found in Ireland, particularly amongst Irish Traveller communities, although Romani Gypsies are also believed to be considerably over-represented in such deaths.

As discussed by Walker (2008) and The All Ireland Traveller Health Study Team (2010), social exclusion, poverty, experiences of racism, bereavement related suicide, untreated mental health issues and substance misuse are all identified as linked to high rates of Irish Traveller self-harm, attempted and successful suicide. Thus Irish findings on the suicide prevalence amongst Travellers mirror findings pertaining to suicide amongst First Nation communities in Australia, Canada and America (Pridmore et al., 2013; Crawford, 2016; Tait et al., 2018; Dastagir, 2019). Indeed, the most recent Irish data gathered in the National Traveller Community Survey (Exchange

House, 2017) further replicates these findings, although notes that respondents – particularly in some localities – indicate that the situation has become considerably worse for community members in the years since previous research was undertaken (for example 55% of their respondents indicated worsening rates of mental health in the community, with 73% stating that they believed poor mental health was now common within Traveller communities), potentially exacerbating the risk of suicide. Of the 482 respondents to the 2017 survey, 82% said they had been affected by suicide and 44% of those affected by suicide in their immediate family stated they also experienced suicide in their wider family (Exchange House, 2017, p48).

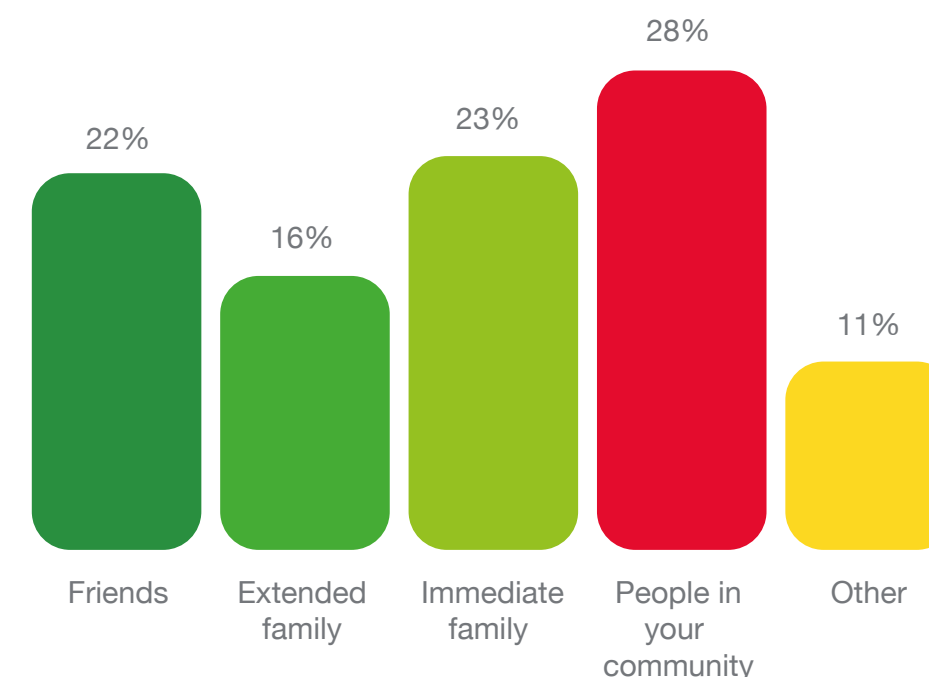
Whilst in the UK we don't have access to such a wide-ranging data set (GTR communities cannot be isolated within the NHS Data Dictionary meaning that health trends cannot be mapped for these populations), in this research we seek to establish whether some level of baseline relationship can be found pertaining to experiences of hate speech/exclusion and suicide ideation; and also to gain some understanding of the extent of suicide within the populations. Importantly too, given that almost nothing is known about the mental health experiences of Roma populations in the UK, it was hoped that some light may be cast on variations of both experience of hate offences, and suicide rates by ethnicity.

The exceptionally limited extent of our knowledge on prevalence rates of suicide amongst the communities in the UK, and how common an experience suicide is amongst extended families, emerges from intermittent passing references in research (Van Cleemput et al., 2004); Rogers (2016) study which identified a considerable

number of respondents who commented on bereavement by suicide and the stark data from a question asked by Josie O'Driscoll within a three day community workshop on "Challenging Stereotypes" convened by GATE Herts in February 2019 attended by 100 participants from diverse communities (including Boaters, Showmen, Roma, New Travellers, a small number of non GTR support workers as well as Romany Gypsies and Irish and Scottish Travellers). In one session participants were asked whether they had experienced suicide within their close or extended family or other networks.

As can be seen in Figure 16, 23% of participants from diverse GTR communities had lost an immediate family member to suicide, 16% someone in their extended family; 22% a friend and 28% a member of their immediate community. It is not possible from this 'snap-shot' to identify the ethnicity, age or gender of those who were bereaved by suicide, or indeed the demographics of those who killed themselves. It is worth emphasising that this question was asked within a session on mental health and wellbeing and the participants were in no way selected because it was believed that they had experienced bereavement in this manner. Thus, as far as possible the response reflected a random sample of participants from GTR communities involved in activism and 'changemaking'.

Figure 16. Percentage of participants in a 'Challenging Stereotypes' workshop directly impacted by suicide in their family and/or wider network



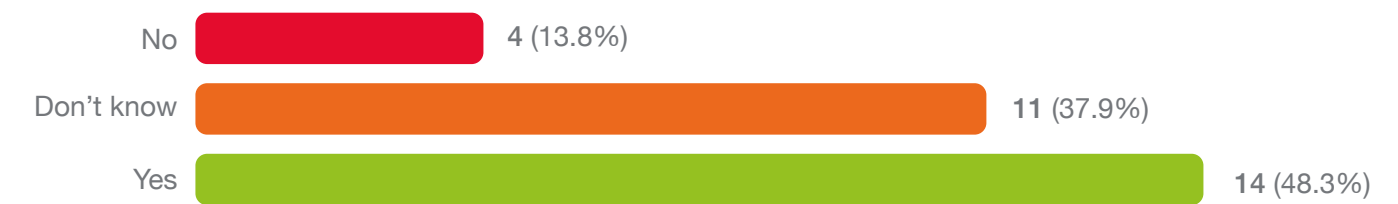
Based on the fact that as a high priority public health concern there is a clear need to identify how common is the experience of suicide in GTR communities, coupled with recognition of the lacuna in evidence in the UK literature, in the current research we asked (with suitable provision of information on support services, and trigger warnings in interviews, focus groups and survey instruments) whether respondents had direct experience of family members/close friends or clients (for those working in NGOs) who had committed suicide (or attempted suicide) in the previous five years.

Whilst from our research, it is not always possible to identify the ethnicity of those people who have attempted or committed suicide, particularly when we have analysed responses from NGO staff members where individual community member respondents have reported family members have died by suicide, it may potentially be possible to extrapolate the ethnicity of those individuals. Similarly, in some quotations or data provided, explicit mention is made of the ethnicity of the person (and their family) who has died.

Survey results from respondents working for NGOs to known suicide and attempted suicides of service users in the past five years

Forty-eight percent of survey respondents who worked for NGOs¹⁵ (this category includes both ‘Other’/non-GTR community members (12 respondents) and individuals who work for NGOs and who are a member of the communities (20 respondents) indicated that they had clients who had either killed themselves or attempted suicide in the last 5 years.

Figure 17. NGO respondents reporting clients who have committed suicide or attempted to do so

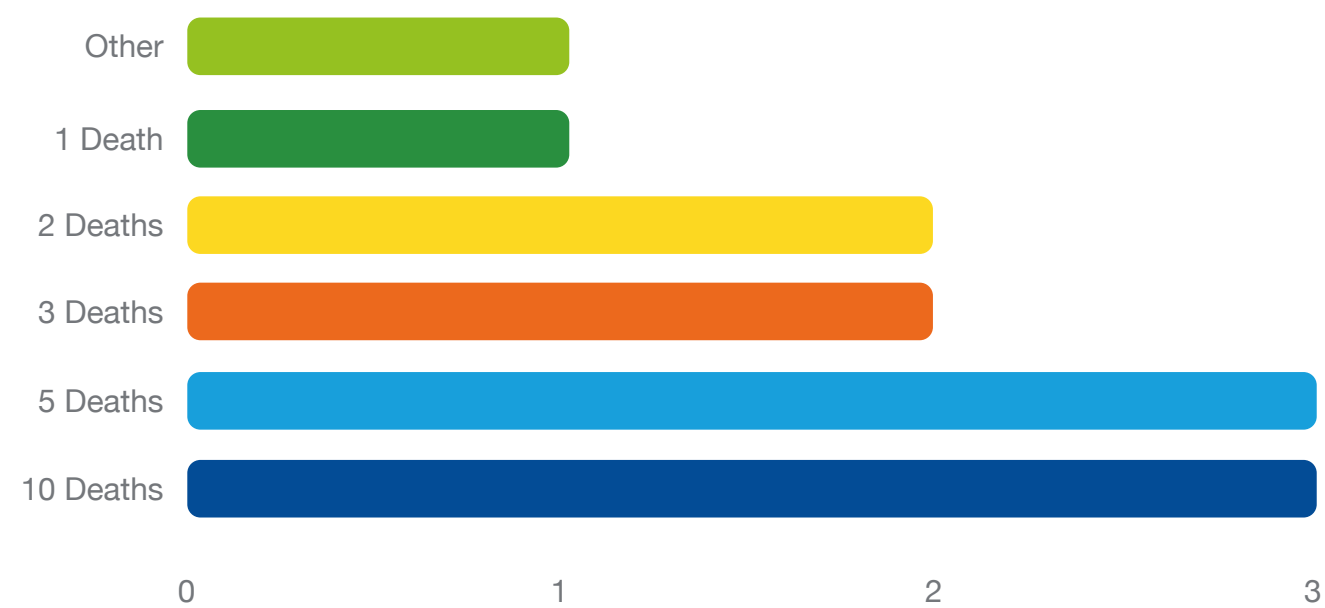


In total (using the text box below this survey question), NGO staff respondents indicated that they were aware of 56 examples of service user deaths from suicide in the last 5 years. (N.B. given that Figure 17 above indicates both attempted and completed suicides, Figure 18 does not align fully to the detailed discussion below as not all respondents were able to provide precise figures for deaths/suicide attempts, thus the category of ‘other’ is utilised in one case to calculate (a minimum of) 56 deaths. One respondent who did not give precise numbers commented:

▀ **Too many. One death is one too many and shows a lack of support within the family and beyond** ▀

Irish Traveller, gender not given, 51–60 years

Figure 18. NGO respondents – numbers of client suicides of which they are aware in the previous 5 years



Of the data presented in Figure 18, three respondents (community members working with/ for NGOs), based in different parts of the UK, each reported being aware of 10 individuals who had committed suicide in the last 5 years. Although all of these respondents are Romani Gypsies (one who did not state gender/age, one male was over 60 years old and one female 41–50 years), two work with local organisations and one with a national organisation.

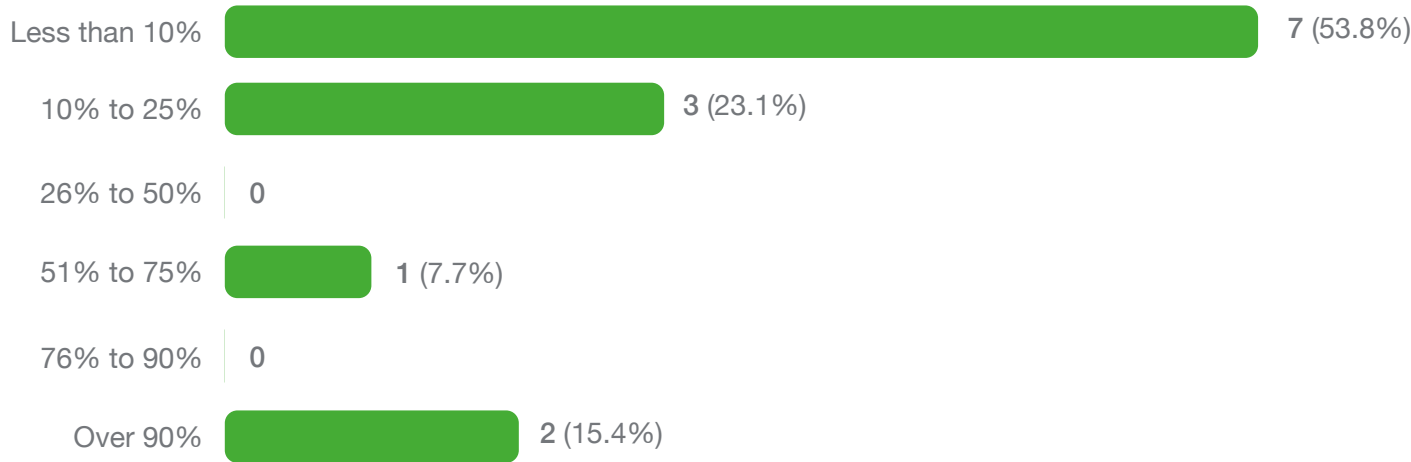
A further three respondents (two ‘Other’, female, 51–60 years, working for major NGOs in different parts of the country) each reported 5 clients who had committed suicide in the previous five years, as did a Romani Gypsy respondent aged 31–40 years.

The remaining respondents in this category each reported between 1 and 3 suicides amongst their client group, whilst as noted, one respondent chose simply to comment qualitatively, indicating that they were aware of ‘too many’ deaths

rather than giving precise figures and we have calculated their response to equate to one death, although this is potentially an undercount. In response to the question how many of those people who committed suicide were in touch with mental health support services, over half of NGO staff indicated that low numbers of such clients were in contact with special health services. This figure was highest when calculated by numbers of responses where client numbers who had died by self-harm were low. In contrast, when we examine data for the 3 cases who reported 10 suicides in the previous five years, we can see that each of these respondents indicated 10% of such deaths (one person in each case) had been in contact with the GP or mental health services before their death in relation to mental health concerns/depression etc. It is noteworthy too that no respondent (and not all were able to answer this question) reported more than half of their clients who had died by suicide had received support/been in contact with their GP or mental health services.

¹⁵Not all respondents answered this question but responses were given by 29/32 individuals in this category.

Figure 19. Number of clients who committed suicide known to be in contact with mental health services/GP in relation to mental health/wellbeing



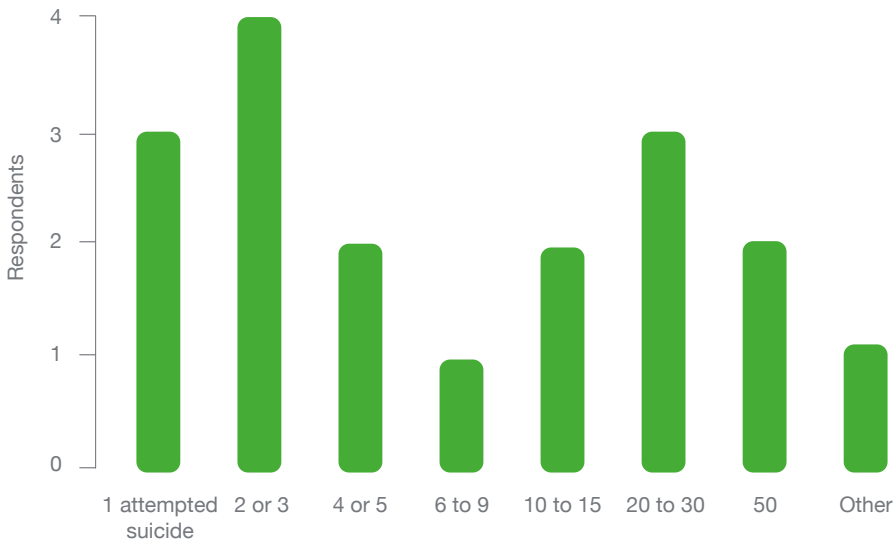
On being asked to provide information on numbers of **attempted suicide amongst clients in the previous five years**, (Figure 20) the numbers are starker still.

58% of respondents who worked for NGOs had service users who had attempted suicide, with the greatest number of respondents (four) indicating two to three clients and three respondents each indicating one attempted suicide, whilst, a further three stated 20–30 clients, and one survey respondent (CEO of a large organisation) placed the figure of attempted suicides at approximately 50 (averaging 10 such attempts per year).

Whilst where a lower figure, e.g. “I know of at least four” or “at least one” is given, we have placed the response in the lowest category. Where an individual stated “I’m not sure [of exact numbers]”, this is not included numerically but counted as ‘other’.

The indications from a number of respondents that para-suicides are in double figures indicates a very high level of distress and unmet need for mental health support, a theme that is not only self-evident from the data provide above and within the literature, but which was also emphasised in the briefing on mental health and suicide prepared by the Traveller Movement in 2019.

Figure 20. NGO workers – attempted client suicides known to the respondent in the previous 5 years



In total, at the most modest calculation based on the data, we estimate attempted suicides known to NGO workers and support staff to account for 131 suicide attempts (averaging 26 attempts per year known to this small sample of 16 NGO staff respondents who replied to this question).

Approximately half of the community support workers suggest that less than 10% of Gypsy,

Travellers and Roma who attempt suicide are receiving professional help and none indicated that all of their clients were in contact with such services. Four respondents each suggested that 50% and 75% of clients who attempted suicide were in contact with mental health professionals or had spoken to their GP about their state of mind at the time of the incident.

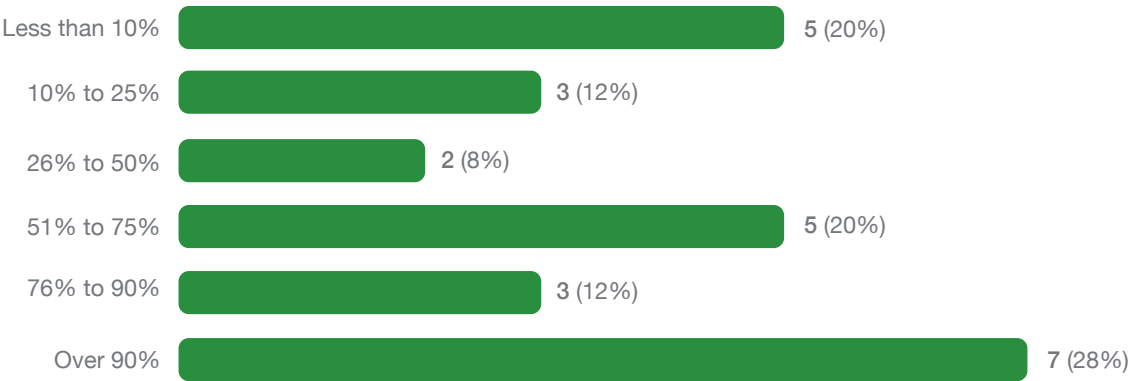
Experiences of hate crime/hate speech and para-suicide/suicide

Whilst it is not possible based on the data we have gathered to clearly establish causation between experiences of hate crime/speech and suicide or para-suicide, as noted, a considerable number of respondents have stressed the corrosive effect on mental health and well-being of being subject to hate speech and discrimination.

Thus, with the caveat on implying direct causation, but seeking to establish a sense of whether there may be a relationship between victimisation and depression/mental health issues and suicide or para-suicide, we asked

respondents whether or not they were directly aware of an individual who committed suicide, or who attempted suicide having experienced hate speech/hate crime that may have impacted their mental health. Of the 25 respondents working for NGOs who answered this question (Figure 21), the majority of respondents indicated that over 50% of such clients had experienced hate crime or hate speech, with the largest number of respondents indicating that in excess of 90% of their clients who had committed suicide or attempted suicide had such experiences.

Figure 21. NGO workers indicating client who had committed /attempted suicide had experienced hate crime/hate speech



In relation to the following section of this report which deals directly with responses (survey, interview and focus group discussions) from community members who are members of a family bereaved through suicide, or who have themselves attempted suicide; we have taken a decision after careful consideration to limit the information available that may potential identify the respondent.

As such in this section – although we discuss data subsequently in broad terms in relation to numbers of respondents by ethnicity; very limited information is provided on the individual (including age/gender), to reduce distress to them should they read this report, and to further decrease any potential for them or their family to be identified. We have also sought to avoid placing in the public domain particularly graphic and personal descriptions that were, in some cases, bravely provided by respondents and which clearly evidenced the trauma experienced by such a loss.

This latter precaution (reducing still further identifying characteristics in this section of the report) is taken as GTR populations are extremely close knit communities and participants stressed on a number of occasions the stigma associated

with mental illness and/or suicide, as well as the need to protect family members from information to which they may not be party (e.g. attempted suicides or in the case of a child or young person, prior death of an older relative by suicide).

Rogers (2016) cited in the Traveller Movement briefing on suicide (2019: pp5-6), has emphasised how her research into bereavement support found that GTR community members will typically seek to protect each other emotionally, by not discussing grief and loss. This failure to manage grief often has significant and long-term health implications “with women commonly suffering from anxiety and depression and men resorting to alcohol or the more extreme bereavement suicide” Noting that bereavement-related suicides are commonplace, Rogers argues that these are “a consequence of the pressure of culturally protective behaviours [which mean] that grief responses are internalised rather than shared and supported”. The issue of the need for culturally appropriate mental health support is returned to in our conclusions.

Figure 22. Respondents who have family members who had died from suicide in the past five years



Overall, 39% of all survey respondents who answered this question had family members who had died through suicide. Of this sub-sample, 55% of community members who had responded to our survey had experienced the death of at least one family member by suicide.

No Boaters or New Travellers indicated death of family members by suicide in the preceding five years and indeed no Roma respondents had such experiences either.

One Showman was represented in these statistics for family bereavement through suicide. As such, the contrast between respondents of ‘ethnic’ Romani Gypsy and Irish, Scottish and Welsh Travellers and Showmen when compared to ‘non-ethnic’ categories are stark and shocking.

Of respondents who had lost a family member to death by suicide, two respondents identified as

‘Other’ but on closer analysis, their description of their heritage illustrated selection of ascription as ‘Other’, although they were a member of ‘ethnic’ GTR populations. One respondent had mixed heritage from more than one ethnic GTR community, whilst in the ‘Other’ box indicated their preference for identification using their own community language rather than a term ascribed by others. Thus, 2/3 of our respondents who selected ‘Other’ in relation to ethnicity but who are members of ethnic GTR communities have also lost family members to suicide.

The differences between Roma populations in these findings (surveys, interviews and focus groups) is particularly interesting and has synergies with responses to this question raised in separate discussions with Roma community activists and interviewees from these populations, who appeared to feel that suicide would be uncommon amongst their communities.

- **Roma just try not to pay attention, ignore**
- **To be honest I did not hear of any. Perhaps there are cases when children remain broken emotionally, which changes them in their adulthood. But not with me or my family members**
- **In my experience no one committed suicide**

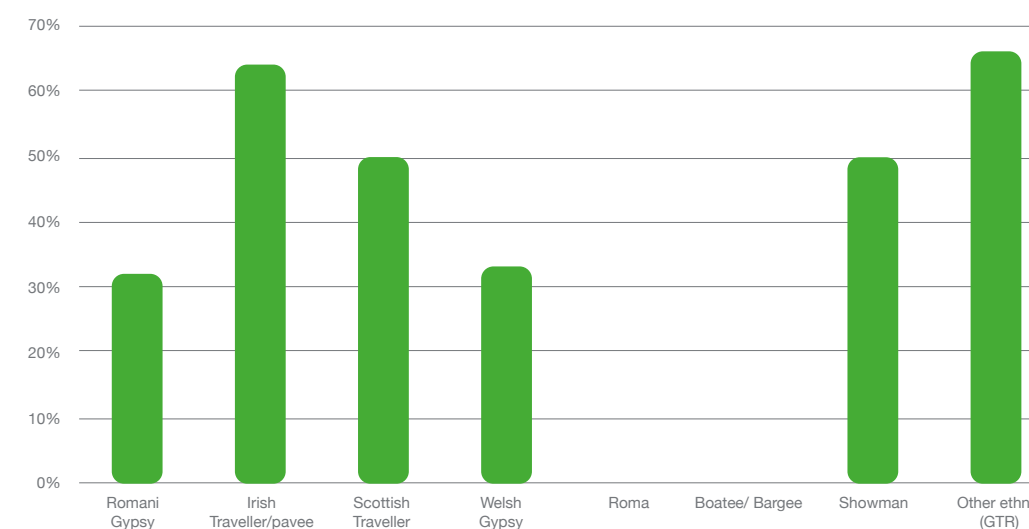
In relation to attempted suicide, however, two Roma respondents (survey responses) referred to extended family members – although it is unclear if this was in the UK or internationally – who had attempted suicide in the previous five years.

Similarly, for Roma respondents, there was considerably lower levels of reporting of depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions than amongst other GTR populations, with only one respondent (11%) from this community indicating that they experienced diagnosed “PTSD, Major Depressive Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder” when contrasted to rates of between 25 and 40% of respondents from some other ethnic GTR communities reporting mental health challenges.

There is no apparent evidence either in European or public health literature of noticeable spikes or unusual patterns in suicide rates amongst Roma people in mainland Europe despite exceptionally high levels of exclusion, racism, material poverty and discrimination (The World Bank, 2019). This may suggest either that this is an ‘invisible’ undiagnosed problem, or that additional protective factors and resilience exist amongst Roma communities. Tentatively, it may be posited that this additional level of resilience may perhaps pertain to the ability for families to live in close-knit villages and enclaves in countries of origin without (in the main) being subject to eviction, challenges to site development or enforced movement into housing, which are all flagged up as key stressors associated with poor mental health for British Gypsies and Travellers (Cemlyn et al., 2009; Greenfields & Brindley, 2016; WEC, 2019). This tentative and emergent finding on differences in suicide/para-suicide rates amongst migrant Roma and other populations is, however, worthy of further investigation. It is worth reflecting on the

possibility that once Roma populations are more established, and/or for some more recent migrants English language skills develop, enhancing alertness to hate speech such as are reported by Romani, Showman and Traveller populations, there may be a shift in reporting of both mental health concerns and (para)suicide. A potential exists – based on research with other migrant populations – that first generation Roma respondents have an increased likelihood of positively contrasting and comparing what may seem to be a relatively benign and non-racist situation in the UK when reflecting on the situation for their communities in countries of origin (as discussed earlier). However, in years to come, a potential will exist that British-born second and subsequent generation Roma people may report a decline in wellbeing, given that racism and exclusion are associated with greater risk factors for psychiatric ill health for second-generation BAME communities (Harvey, 2011; The Migration Observatory, 2020).

Figure 23. Percentage of community member respondents (by ethnicity) who have experienced bereavement by suicide



As can be seen, over 60% of Irish Traveller/ Pavee respondents and over a third of Romani Gypsies (the largest groups of respondents) have experienced bereavement through a relative committing suicide. Whilst by definition we are discussing a self-selected sample who responded to the survey we would still note the concerning high rate of responses pertaining to relatives who have died in this way.

The 25 respondents who have lost relatives to suicide cited **62 examples of family members who had died by taking their own lives in the previous 5 years**. As stated, we have consciously decided against making graphic reference to the types of deaths people have told us about, but would note that death by hanging was spontaneously mentioned on several occasions both as a ‘risk’/likely reaction to experiences of racism as identified by some respondents –

suggesting that they have direct knowledge/ experience of such deaths – and also in relation to bereavements where people opted to provide additional information within the survey, interviews and focus groups etc. As such suicide in this manner may well be over-represented amongst the GTR populations when compared to wider populations.

Twenty-three respondents provided precise details on the number of relatives who had killed themselves in the previous five years. Figure 24 illustrates this information, whilst Figure 25 breaks this down further by ethnicity of respondent to provide a tentative picture (when compared to Figure 23) of the extent of suicide within some GTR communities. Two respondents simply made comments such as ‘some’ or indicated that they were aware of suicides but not precisely how many within their extended family.

Figure 24. Numbers of deaths by suicide within family networks reported by Community Respondents (deaths occurring within previous 5 years)

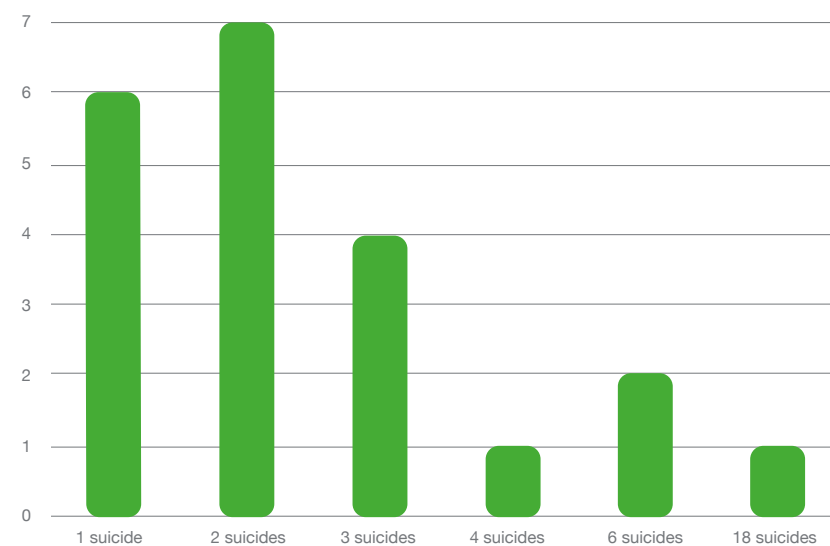
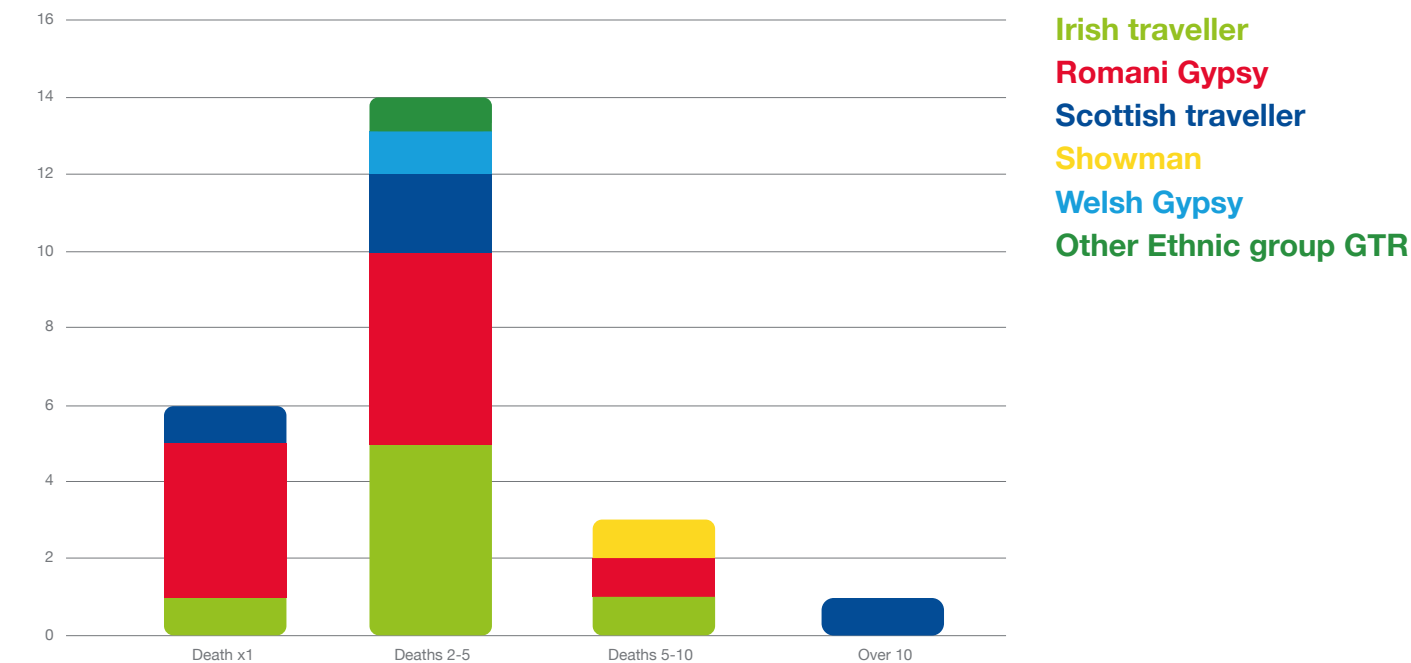


Figure 25. Multiple and single deaths by suicide in family network reported by ethnicity of respondent



The two respondents who did not provide details on numbers of such bereavements were one case each for Romani Gypsy and Irish Traveller people. As can be seen, the largest number of respondents to this question had experienced multiple bereavements (2–5 family members) by suicide. These responses were most commonly found amongst Irish Traveller and Romani Gypsy respondents (largest categories of respondents by ethnicity in the survey). Given that Irish Travellers as a percentage of respondents were lower than Romani Gypsies it can be seen that there is an almost equal number of Romani Gypsy and Irish Traveller respondents noting that 2-5 relatives had died by suicide, indicating considerable over-representation of Irish Travellers in this statistic.

It is also worth commenting that a deeply concerning number of young people between the ages of 18 and 30 have been directly impacted by suicide, with 13/20 (65%) of all young people

responding to the survey who are in this age range reporting suicide within their families.

All of the young people in this sub-group (comprising in descending order of responses Scottish Travellers, then Irish Travellers followed by Romani (English) and Welsh Gypsies), noted that this was an event that had occurred on more than one occasion. The impacts of exposure to multiple suicides at such a young age are likely to be profound and life-long, exacerbating risk factors for suicide amongst younger GTR populations, which are already higher for those who have experienced the death by suicide of a close relative (Gluck, 2008; Rogers, 2016). In total, 20% of all bereaved respondents were under the age of 30. In some cases these respondents spoke of the death of a parent by suicide.

One particularly poignant interview reflected on the death by suicide, due to a tragic

misunderstanding, and lack of cultural competence by statutory service providers, of a young woman who left several young children. She killed herself because she apparently mistakenly thought her children were going to be removed into care, as she was unable to read letters sent to her from social services departments:

► *I had a sister in law who committed suicide [at a young age]. Left ... children behind her. Because she was that scared of social services taking her children. It was a miscommunication. It was a language barrier. Even though they spoke the same language, the Traveller comes across as being aggressive because they talk fast, especially the men, and I don't think social services understood. She was illiterate, and any letters that were coming out, she wasn't reading them, she was putting them on the shelf, waiting for someone to come round to read them for her... So that was a big tragedy. That was nearly two years ago. And the impact it's having – like I said, my daughter now is still under bereavement counselling [as a result of the tragedy]. But the older generation won't go for bereavement counselling, they won't go for CAMHS or anything like that, because of the shame. You don't talk about mental health* ■

Interviewee

Of those respondents who reported a suicide in their immediate family, 28% reported that the deceased person had directly spoken about their experiences of exclusion and hate speech/crime prior to their suicide. Of this sub-sample, 71% reported that they felt the individuals' low mood may have been impacted by these experiences, citing direct statements from the deceased person which led them to think that there was a connection between the hate crime/speech or discrimination and the person's mental health status/suicide:

► *Being subjected to racism throughout your whole life and feeling the hatred from some non-Travellers leaves its mark on a person, it can break a person down so much that they feel they can't take any more and the hurt and pain are just too much to bear* ■

► *Imagine living a life where you're forced to be something that innately you're not. You can't maintain that. Mentally, physically, emotionally, you can't maintain that for long before it all crumbles down around you* ■

► *Because before he died he said that there is no life for an uneducated Traveller man other than to be hated upon* ■

► *My cousin was bullied at school for years for being a Traveller – he could never wait to get out and left, he was buzzing initially because he got a really good apprenticeship and was loving working in a trade, but he couldn't spend two minutes on a site without being called a knacker or a pikey by his colleagues. The last time we spoke before he died he said that it felt like it was a hurdle he would never be able to get over and it was pushing him into a dark place. He said he was afraid to look forward to things now because everything he looks forward to gets ruined by it* ■

► *My mother told me she spent her time in the chalet looking at a tree, whenever their temp planning comes back up and she has to go through all the hate from the county councillors she feels like walking out and hanging herself from it* ■

Participants in interviews and focus groups also emphasised the impact of being 'hated on' on mental health:

► *But I think the highest suicides as well is also where Travellers get an awful lot of discrimination is in prison. I've known of one well-known prison in London, the guards actually threw razor blades underneath the door, underneath the cell door. That was a [senior professional] who witnessed that. When she used to go in and she used to get Travellers out once a month for a Travellers' meeting, the screws would say, 'Come along, it's time for the pikey picnic'. So they used to get a lot of harassment* ■

- *I had a cousin who committed suicide ... I think it builds up. It's not as in one person just calling you a 'pikey', it's that whole thing of your whole life being ... Then, you start to believe it that you aren't any good* ■
- *I truly believe that the reason XX committed suicide, and he left two boys behind him, was because he used to say to me, 'I can't bear to see my boys, my chavvies, go through what I went through ... I can't do it, I can't do it'. I used to try and keep him strong. He used to say, 'I can't see those boys go through the same thing'* ■
- *Well, I've heard a lot of young men saying that they'll never be able to go out and get a job again [in the wake of particularly negative media or hostile reporting], they may as well lie down and die. I've heard that from a lot of young men, saying they'll be better off to be dead* ■

When asked if relatives who had committed suicide had been in contact with their GPs or specialist mental health services only a very small number of community members indicated that their family member(s) were in receipt of such support.

Two individuals who had experienced multiple bereavements referred to some (but only in the region of 10–15%) of those who died having been in contact with health services. Two others indicated that they were unaware whether or not their family member was accessing help and the remainder stated that the deceased person was not in touch with mental health services of their GP.

As with NGO staff members who responded to the survey, we asked community respondents – and also in interviews and focus groups – if they were aware of family members who had attempted suicide. Unsurprisingly, the number of responses to this question on knowledge of relatives who had attempted suicide was 16% higher than for those who reported completed suicide (with 56% of all survey respondents indicating suicide attempts in their family). That reports of suicide and attempted suicide is not higher still, may perhaps be attributed to the stigma associated with suicide attempts and also that as Rogers (2016) reported, there is a strong emphasis on protecting others from distress and pain meaning that even when an individual is suicidal or has attempted such an act they may attempt to keep this from family members. As one focus group respondent said, referring to a close relative who killed herself:

- *I saw her the day before ... She was getting ready, she loved [family celebration] she loved it. There were 100 women stood there and she'd be the one I'd pick out that wouldn't have done that* ■

Figure 26. Suicide attempts by relatives of community member respondents



Of the 31 respondents who provided additional information in relation to attempted suicide within their families, one individual said that they were aware of such attempts but not how many. Others attempted to quantify how many relatives had attempted suicide. The pattern of suicide attempts (although not broken down by gender, or age, of the suicidal individual), was aligned to the findings in relation to ethnicity, with Irish Travellers, Romani Gypsies and Scottish Travellers most represented in relation to numbers of those indicating relatives who had attempted to kill themselves.

attempted suicide, two were of ethnic GTR background; whilst one Showman and one Boater also replied in this way, indicating once more a lower level of attempted suicide found within surrounding family networks for ‘non-ethnic’ groups, other than the (small sample) of Showmen. In contrast to the fact that no Roma were included in suicide statistics, two Roma respondents indicated that relatives had attempted to kill themselves although it is not known whether these incidents occurred in countries of origin or amongst migrant populations who may potentially be at greater risk of depression or isolation:

Of the four individuals who identified as ‘Other’ who answered that they had relatives who had

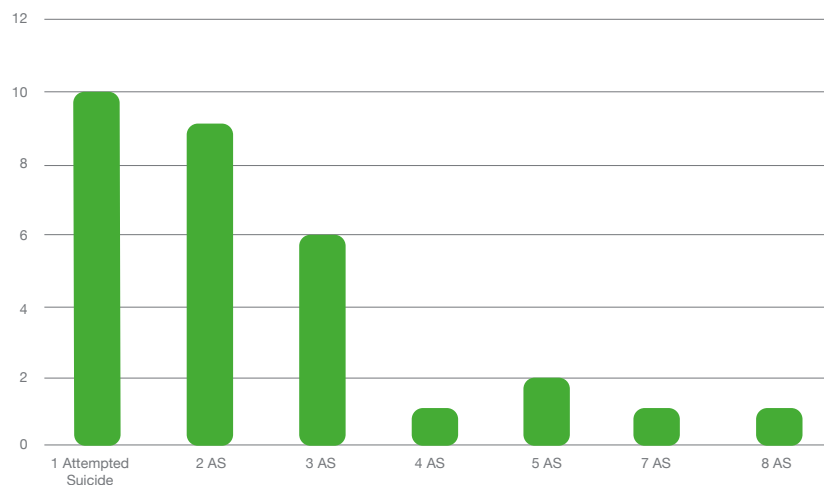
- *It was directly related to a particular instance of betrayal from gadje they trusted who in turn committed hate crimes and bullying both in person and online* ■

Figure 27. Suicide attempts by relatives of respondents by ethnicity

In the last five years have any members of your family attempted suicide	Ethnicity								No answer	Totals
	Bargee	English Romani Gypsy	Irish Traveller	Roma	Scottish Gypsy / Traveller	Showperson	Welsh Gypsy	Other		
Yes	1	11	9	2	4	1	3	4	0	35
No	4	15	0	6	1	1	0	0	0	27
No answer	1	8	2	1	1	0	0	13	0	26
Totals	6	34	11	9	6	2	3	17	0	88

Shockingly 100% of Welsh Gypsies; 82% of Irish Travellers, 80% of Scottish Travellers and 32% of Romani Gypsies respondents reported having relatives who had attempted suicide in the previous five years. There was one case (50% of the small number of this category of respondents) of a Showman reporting a suicide attempt in their family.

Figure 28. Numbers of known suicide attempts made by family members



In total, the 35 respondents who reported having relatives who had attempted suicide enumerated 73 such attempts amongst their family members. In addition, three people indicated that they themselves had attempted suicide.

The most shocking case consisted of a report from one respondent who had had 18 family members die through suicide. This person also stated that a further five including herself, had attempted suicide. The respondent in this case indicated that hate incidents were a major influencing factor in both suicide attempts and deaths within their extended family.

Another respondent stated that

I’ve attempted suicide 4 times, including [in the] last 5 years”, and further highlighted a sense of despair and depression at the exclusion facing their community, noting that ‘racism has impacted me greatly

In addition, five participants in interviews and focus groups referred to suicide attempts within their own immediate families – including by their children or parents – and one person also acknowledged that they themselves had attempted suicide in the past.

The subject of depression – in some cases leading to self-harm or suicide attempts – as some previously nomadic or sited respondents attempted to settle or integrate into housing once moved from a site or they became unable to sustain roadside living any longer, emerged in focus groups as a key trigger for depression and anxiety, was also identified by Cemlyn et al. (2009) and Greenfields and Smith (2011):

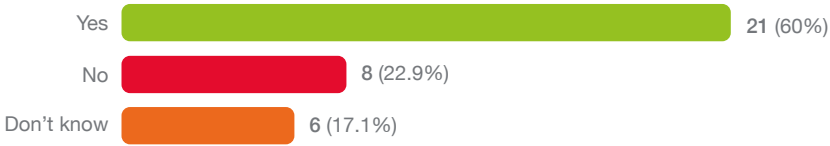
- I’ve only spoken to two of them directly about it [suicide attempts] but both of them gave the isolation they felt because of hate as their biggest reason. They said it’s almost worst when you’re settled and trying to ‘integrate’ because you don’t have the same community structure to withdraw to, you just feel isolated and by yourself and like you’re stuck in a corner with it*
- Gypsies and Travellers that have been pushed into council houses. You know, other people think, ‘Oh, they’ve got it good, they’ve been given a free house’. A lot of them didn’t want to live in a house, firstly. Secondly, they didn’t have the money to buy their own land, to live the way that they want. Thirdly, well, they’re stuck in what my mother would always say, stuck behind four brick walls. She can’t bear it ... then what’s happened after that is mental health has increased, a lot of travellers living in council houses have committed suicide*
- We got to a stage where we were scared to answer the phone [with number of family deaths]. It was like, ‘Oh Jesus, who now? Who next?’. Suicide needs to be dealt with. It was only last night we heard of a 15-year-old travelling boy who tried to kill himself, but thank God he was found [before he died]*

Only 16 respondents who identified suicide attempts amongst their relatives stated that family members were receiving professional support before the attempt, and in one case despite being ‘sectioned’ as a result of their suicide attempt, paperwork was lost and their family member was released to attempt self-harm again. In another case, the respondent indicated that following on from suicide attempts, relatives had collectively supported family members to access private therapy:

It is constant. It happens every month, from a small comment to simply being yelled at. I personally have had many fights simply for being a Romany. That is enough for gorgers to want to fight you, and always in numbers, never one on one. These are the same numbers of experiences that happened to two of my family – both now receiving help after long talks with our own, private and funded by us, which it should not have to be. But there you are

Figure 29 below illustrates that in 60% of cases where respondents reporting having family members who attempted suicide, before the event the individual had spoken about experiences of hate speech and hate crime.

Figure 29. Whether relatives who attempted suicide had discussed/ experienced hate speech or hate crime (community member responses)



The vast majority of those reporting that their relative who attempted suicide had discussed hate speech or being victimised before the suicide attempt (95% of this sub sample) believed that these experiences were directly related to the low mood or suicide attempt of their relative (or indeed themselves):

- Because when the world makes your culture feel worthless or non-existent then the feel like that is what you are too*
- It was myself [attempted suicide] and I'd had enough of being attacked for no reason*
- Because our traditional jobs are being taken away from us and lack of housing, all which is the man's responsibility, are being taken away from us. Once you lose honour and respect as a man then there's nothing left*
- If you are a Traveller you expect to get aggro but not from social media, TV, newspapers, friends, work mates, teachers, doctors, councils. It's everywhere. Some people who don't have family support can't get through. It's not easy being GRT*

Improving wellbeing for victims of hate crime and hate speech

In the final section of the survey (and also as the concluding discussion within interviews and focus groups) we asked respondents to reflect on whether – and what type of – support for victims of hate incidents might impact positively on the mental health of GTR community members.

Seventy-nine percent of survey respondents reported that taking steps to reduce hate incidents and/or providing support for victims of such incidents would in their opinion improve the mental health of GTR community members. Fourteen respondents were not sure if this would make a difference (ten of whom were community members) and four (all of whom are from GTR communities of whom two are Scottish Travellers) did not believe that reducing hate crimes/speech would improve the mental health of their communities.

No additional information was provided by those respondents who stated 'no' or 'don't know' on being asked if reduction in hate

speech/crime would help with mental health and wellbeing of their communities.

Of those who indicated that they did feel reducing hate incidents would improve the mental health of the communities, 49 respondents added additional comments in the text box where we asked for suggestions for support or interventions that might assist the wellbeing of GTR of victims of hate incidents.

There was in practice little difference between responses and recommendations made by community members and NGO staff (whether both community members and support workers, or 'Other' (non-community members) in relation to to core themes which emerged from this question (see further below). Interestingly, however, an age variable could be noted, as often – although not exclusively – older, and hence perhaps with greater strategic experience, respondents who are working with NGOs were more likely to identify overarching practice based aims such as:

In every community there should be Traveller and Gypsy forums set up alongside people from statutory services as well as voluntary services where all discrimination against this group can be challenged. As long as the community do not have support, this [hate crime and poor mental health] will continue but the more they see something being done and not feeling alone this would give them the confidence to report and trust those outside their own community

Scottish 'Other', NGO worker, female, over 60 years

■ *Hate crime and speech can only alienate and isolate people which makes them vulnerable. Providing blueprints to help organisations run well planned and structured workshops to discuss possible interventions and support might get the subject out and on the table instead of being something we all know is a problem but do nothing about* ■

White British 'Other', NGO worker, male, over 60 years

■ *For GPs to be made more aware when a Traveller or Gypsy is registered with them if they show signs of being very withdrawn that maybe it's not medication they need, its someone to talk to or report an incident. This is also very difficult because Travellers will be refused to be registered at a GP surgery. Indirect racism is very difficult to define if they are refused and no reason is given though some do say 'we have enough of you on our books do you live down the road with the other lot', then we can challenge this* ■

Romani Gypsy, NGO/community worker, female, over 60 years

Responses to the final question in the survey: "Can you tell us why you answered as you did, and provide any suggestions for support or interventions, you feel might help the mental health and wellbeing of GTR of victims of hate crime and hate speech" can best be broken down into the following categories, which are also aligned to the themes that emerged from focus groups and interviews when participants were asked to make recommendations which may be help to improve the mental health of community members. Exemplar quotations are provided under the core headings to illustrate responses to this question.

Challenging institutional racism

■ *Police/government/society as a whole treating GTR hate speech and crime as crime would help. Also not putting the GTR in cages [highly structured sites/houses] would allow us to live our lives more appropriately* ■

Scottish Traveller, male 21–30 years, survey respondent

■ *Challenge media coverage and [for community members to receive training to] do TV interviews, write letters to the papers and challenge comments on social media. Work needs to be done with the media owners like papers and social media platforms to educate them as they're allowing the stuff to be posted and they don't understand its racist stuff that's on there* ■

Showman, female, 51–60 years, survey respondent

■ *For me, I think Gypsies and Travellers should be taking cases themselves against the government for allowing their rights to be abused in this way [in relation to comments that are seen as exacerbating racial hatred made by politicians in the media or in Parliament]* ■

Romani Gypsy, female, focus group

■ *It's a really basic thing but schools and workplaces taking it more seriously would help so much to core themes which emerged from this question. You do have to go to your school or university or workplace where people who make those comments about you are every day though, and usually you're just told to suck it up and get on with it, which can be harder than those people think. It puts you on edge in your place of work or school 24/7, like you never know when it's going to happen again and can never let your guard down – I think that might be easier if there was a faith that the people in charge at those places would deal with those instances properly* ■

'Other' mixed Roma/Traveller ethnicity, 21–30 years, no gender stated, survey respondent

■ *No-one cares what happens to us. Even the police are racist to GT peoples. Leaving us with nowhere to turn to for help. It is not even*

considered racist to hate Gypsies. And often [BAME activists] don't recognise exclusion and racism, saying that because we look White we don't experience racism. I think until [anti-GRT discrimination] is recognised as a form of racism, then nothing will improve the situation ■

Scottish Traveller, female, 31–40 years, survey respondent

Provision of culturally competent statutory services and mental health support

- ▶ *A GRT strategy for suicide prevention training to be rolled out kind of across the countries, and made available to Gypsy and Traveller communities, taught in a way that's really accessible, that uses language that the communities are comfortable with, that opens up conversations about it as well, so people feel more equipped. Because people are dealing with it within their families and their interpersonal relationships* ■

'Other', NGO staff member, female, 31–40 years, interview

- ▶ *People who have been victims and are suffering need screening by a qualified person to see if they need professional help and supported to access counselling etc. The service could also offer self-care ideas for coping and a group for people to get together and talk* ■

Irish Traveller, female, 51–60 years, survey respondent

- ▶ *Support services targeted at the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and tailored to match their needs. Easily accessible in terms of language and literacy. Peer led services or services such as assertive outreach run by trusted health visitors signposting to mental health workers who have received training and are culturally*

competent and know about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and the issues they face ■

Boater, NGO staff member, female, 41–50 years, survey respondent

- ▶ *Mental health is a bigger broader issue that needs to be addressed by providing a range of improvements for us, hate crime and speech perpetuates and just grows into bigger issues. Victim support services. Helpline. Videos* ■

Romani Gypsy, NGO staff member, female, 41–50 years, survey respondent

- ▶ *Tailored mental health services to support community members I think if we trained GRT up as councillors that would be a good start, they could then support others to train or gain understanding. Then the support could just happen in conversation as people are chatting. Even family members who have tried and failed [suicide], they won't access counselling* ■

Romani Gypsy, NGO staff member, 31–40 years, no gender provided, survey respondent

- ▶ *Coroners ... we need to know, we don't know the numbers [of suicides] and we need some kind of statistics... We need the data recorded [so can ensure appropriate services are in place]* ■

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years, focus group

- ▶ *Social media campaigns and media – challenge stigma of talking about mental health* ■

No ethnicity or gender stated, 41–50 years, survey respondent

Empowerment and recognition of the communities' histories and validity

- ▀ *Space for victims to be listened to. Space for GTR-led groups, to openly discuss experiences supported by non-GTR where appropriate. Training GTR in recognising and responding to hate crime/speech* ▀

'Other' White British, NGO staff member, male, 51–60 years, survey respondent

- ▀ *Positive aspects put in the media. Education on working in a moving community* ▀

Boater, female 41–50 years, survey respondent

- ▀ *Language lessons, cultural studies, a radio station for GRT people by GRT people, with GRT news reported by people who are from our nation who go through it. I think gorjas should be stopped and fined for using our language or dress if they cannot prove they're from our people. I think horse shows should have demos and band stages near them, to encourage services such as where pitches are available, to help encourage more pitches, places to find out how to help with money and find lawyers, workshops to outline your rights, how to organise and protect yourselves against bullying and harassment. That the police watching over our events should be Romani folk themselves. Give us a connection (the radio station) give us control (aid and places to seek help at fairs and stopping places). Permanent sites and more awareness of our rights (taking back control physically as well as mentally)* ▀

Welsh Gypsy, male, 21–30 years, survey respondent

Recognition of 'difference' and intersectional exclusion that impacts community members

- ▀ *I think government policy and media monitoring need to be addressed in regard to attitudes toward GRT people in society. However, I think the community could also be more accepting of difference with in itself. We need to communicate that our identities are ethnicity based and not lifestyle choices. That we can all contribute different things to a wider society and be appreciated for that. We need to try to avoid as a community perpetuating stereotypes by denying that those in the community that don't fit those stereotypes are true GRT. This includes working on the acceptance of LGBTQ+ GRT people* ▀

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years, survey respondent

- ▀ *Like LGBT... I was talking to [Lesbian Traveller] last night, actually, and her father called her lesbian-this and lesbian-that. And it's very hard, very, very hard for Travellers. Even though the mother and father want to accept it and they don't feel as hurt as what you'd imagine, it's the peer pressure of other people as well. I think they're more worried about what other people are going to think, the shame and the family, then the [impact on] brothers and sisters...* ▀

Irish Traveller, female, 41–50 years, interview

- ▀ *My perception around male [GTR] victims of domestic violence is that we're not even at the beginning of a point where the right support is in place. Either even in Gypsy and Traveller organisations, often, being equipped to deal with and support people in that situation. But even wider, just generally mainstream organisations who work in that kind of area* ▀

'Other', NGO staff member, female, 31–40 years, interview

Campaigns that challenge media and political bias and discrimination

- Education is key. Many people are so beaten down that many do not understand they are protected under Equality legislation. It's about the community knowing their rights and even more importantly knowing how to access them. This will then have a ripple effect, people can gain a sense of control over their life

Welsh Gypsy, NGO worker, female, 21–30 years, survey respondent

- There is a need to systemically address racism and discrimination throughout services and to ensure that all professionals e.g. GPs/receptionists, health/mental health workers, teachers, DWP etc have proper training. The Government needs to take this seriously as Gypsy Traveller communities are used by politicians to manipulate voters. There is no challenge to the status quo right now and that's what we need. In my experience, when local settled communities are educated to the facts they are shocked and supportive of the struggles in the main. More funding for that type of community work with local communities and Gypsy Travellers visible within that work/leading and partnering in that would improve things

'Other', Irish/British heritage, NGO worker, female, 51–60 years, survey respondent

Active police and criminal justice system engagement, prosecution of those who commit hate offences and support for victims

- We monitor most of Twitter and most of social media platforms. The thing is that we are frustrated ourselves. All of them are sent to True Vision. They're all reported as hate crime, and we've had one conviction. One conviction. A lot of them [police dealing with reports] come back and say, 'Well, the people that are commenting that are in a different country, they're not in the UK, there's nothing we can do about it'. It makes you feel like, what are you doing it

for? To be honest with you. That's the kind of feeling you get. You know that you have to do it, you can't give up. You just have to keep on what you're doing. I can imagine what it's like for people when they're sending in these reports because it's frustrating for us, it must be twice as frustrating for them that they're not hearing of the court or people being convicted of these crimes. The majority of stuff we get back from the police is, 'Nothing we can do about it. We've logged it, we've recorded it. Nothing we can do about it'. So, holding people accountable

Irish Traveller, leading activist, female, focus group

- Make hate speech and hate crimes against GRT community members more talked about, so it's understood what behaviour is not acceptable

Roma woman, 21–30 years, survey respondent

- Services to educate Travelers about what they can do to challenge hate speech and legal advice/advocacy to take offenders to court

Showman, works with NGO, female 51–60 years, survey respondent

- Get the police to actually prosecute people for racist comments instead of the same crap words of advice, and recognise the race hate crimes for what they are instead of saying GRT are 10 years behind any other ethnic group. I work for the police and suffered racism, reported it and it gets brushed under the carpet with a slap on the wrist, I have no doubt that half the police forces don't still truly recognise GRT as an ethnic group, nor do the press or social media platforms

Irish Traveller, female, 41–50 years, survey respondent

► ***I think there should be a greater accountability. Accountability [of] the media. If they're going to provide a platform for hate speech, which in my opinion, the majority of their comment sections on their online media articles are a platform for which hate speech is spoken. If they're going to provide that platform, there should be a legal onus on them that they are responsible for what's posted there, they are to monitor it, they are to mediate it, they are to report it. There are times when, in some of those media comments, there are criminal offences happening*** ◀

Romani Gypsy, Social Changemaker, female, 41–50 years, focus group

► ***I think about reporting hate crime, I think if there were more places the Travellers could report it, and I think if they were taken a little bit more seriously when they would be reporting it, for whoever be writing it down to say, 'That's terrible, you shouldn't be allowed to put up with this. This shouldn't happen to you and is illegal...'*** ◀

[it would impact wellbeing]" (Irish Traveller woman, 41-50, interview

In the conclusions to this report, we now sum up these themes and recommendations and relate these to other core findings of the research, to make a series of concrete recommendations for policy and practice.

Conclusions and recommendations

This complex, multi-level study, whilst focused on experiences of hate crime, hate speech and discrimination, set out to explore the potential relationship between these elements, poor mental health and suicide within GTR communities.

Whilst respondents from all of the range of communities incorporated within the broadest policy definitions of the communities

(Cromarty, 2019) which includes Showmen, New Travellers and Boaters, participated in this study, and we clearly found evidence of discrimination, risk and abuse perpetrated against all of these communities, with Showmen of 'non-ethnic' groups in particular contributing evidence of suicide, para-suicide and violent attacks; the most striking findings relate to the experiences of Scottish and Irish Travellers and Welsh and

English Romani Gypsies. Roma respondents also evidenced experiences of discrimination and peaks in hate speech against them, particularly in the wake of negative broadcast media, but in the main it is Romani Gypsy and Traveller communities who bear the brunt of a remorseless tide of negativity, discrimination, exclusion, and hate speech/crime, which, even when reported to authorities appear to be overwhelmingly met with institutional disinterest or disbelief.

Our findings evidence the interplay between broadcast and print media and what appears to be at times a cynical (or at least dispassionate) practice amongst many media outlets of recycling stereotypical (typically negative) tropes and rescreening 'popular' programmes to boost ratings in the wake of political discourse or negative publicity pertaining to Gypsy, Traveller communities. Respondents to the study provided abundant examples of the detrimental effects of such programming, or use of 'coded' negative language and images in print media and how this intersects with waves of hate speech on social media platforms. Politicians are also at times implicated in such behaviours and respondents were clear on the need for political and community leaders to take responsibility for, and an ethical approach to, labelling and demonising their communities.

As a number of respondents made clear, use of such hostile and racist language against other BAME communities, particularly in the light of the long overdue spotlight on institutional racism, discriminatory outcomes, and public discourse around representations of 'Race and Ethnicity' in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, would not be acceptable towards other minority communities. Indeed, the evidence gathered

in this report appears to add to the weight of evidence produced repeatedly (e.g. by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, 2009; 2018; Women and Equalities Committee, 2019), which suggest that anti-Traveller/Romaphobia is indeed the 'last acceptable form of racism' (McGarry, 2017).

Whilst it is not possible to prove a direct correlation between experiences of hate crime, hate speech and discrimination, poorer mental health and increased suicide rates within Gypsy and Traveller populations we believe that the evidence presented in this report is highly persuasive and has clear synergies with research linking racism to poorer mental health (Wallace et al., 2016 etc.) and indeed increased rates of suicide (per Australian, American and Canadian research op. cit.) as has been found for First Nation/Aboriginal people experiencing deep exclusion and rapid acculturation pressures, coupled with negativity towards their cultures and identities (e.g. Crawford, 2016; Tait et al., 2018).

Our findings are the first that we are aware of which can be compared to Irish literature (All Ireland Traveller Health Study Team, 2010; Exchange House, 2017), which examined prevalence of suicide amongst the Irish Traveller community, and bear out persistent anecdotal evidence of excessive rates of suicide amongst Gypsy and Traveller populations. Although for some communities we have only very small samples (e.g. Scottish Travellers, Welsh Romanies and Showmen), the findings relating to rates of suicide are deeply alarming and significantly more in-depth research is required to explore the extent of suicide and para-suicide amongst these groups, as well as identification of protective factors. The overall rate of suicide and attempted suicide across Romani Gypsy and Traveller population

which our respondents evidence, can we argue, equate to a public health crisis which requires urgent intervention.

What is starkly apparent too from our research, is that without establishing a clear evidence base through the inclusion of Gypsies, Traveller and Roma communities into British health statistics, it is not possible to understand the full extent of what has been called (in the Irish context) “a crisis of mental health” facing the GTR communities (McCurry, 2019).

We are profoundly troubled also by the evidence presented repeatedly by participants, of the impacts of institutional racism on the diverse communities, from barriers to accessing health care, to poor relationships with police services and lack of response to reporting of racial hatred and discrimination, as well as inter-generational cycles of bullying within schools. In total, the data presented and persistence of particular narratives is clearly associated by many respondents, both NGO staff and community members with a sense of mistrust of the authorities charged with supporting victims of crime, hate speech and discrimination, and also for many, a withdrawal into their own communities, and increasing rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.

The impact on children’s wellbeing of exposure to relentlessly negative representations of their culture, bullying and social exclusion, and for some, a repeated cycle of premature death of relatives through suicide, have the potential to profoundly affect children’s opportunities in life. That we identified and received responses from so many high achieving, successful, community engaged respondents, is evident of exceptional levels of resilience within the communities, and also a tribute to the care lavished on children by

protective parents (see further, Rogers, 2016) who emphasised the total centrality of children and the elderly to GTR cultures.

Despite these culturally successful strategies and indeed a sense of ‘stoicism’, which is apparent within the data gathered for this project, it is clear that at the most fundamental there is a requirement for mechanisms to support inclusion and bring about equality and enhanced outcomes for the GTR populations (see WEC, 2019). There is also an urgent need to ensure that Boaters/ Bargees and Showmen are protected from hate crimes and hate speech, and that Roma populations do not become ‘left behind’ in any interventions designed to mitigate the appalling outcomes identified within this study.

Before moving on to list a number of key recommendations, it is important to note that one key finding is related to the concept of “hidden identities” of GTR community members. As has been highlighted earlier, whilst in some ways the lack of visibility of GTR communities as BAME populations may act (at times) as a protective factor to seek to avoid bullying, discrimination, and structural racism, this is not always a successful tactic, particularly impossible for ‘roadside’ Travellers and where communities are easily identifiable by residence, name, or through long-standing connections to a locality. Living with a dual identity with hope of becoming invisible within wider society results in strong feelings of ‘othering’, and is in effect a form of psychological and structural violence, which can lead to a person feeling that they don’t belong to either GTR or settled communities. One respondent describes this as having to have a dual personality,

■ ***They are literally schizophrenic because they’ve got to live two different lives, two different personalities. ... We all have a sense and need to belong. When you’re trying to belong in two camps, you belong in neither. To your GRT family, you’re trying to be something you’re not. To the outside community, you’re still trying to be something you’re not. You don’t fit in anywhere, and that’s not good for your mental health*** ■

Romani Gypsy, female, 41–50 years, interview

Conversely, as was noted by a number of respondents – particularly community member activists and members of the ‘Social Changemakers’ - there is a move towards reclaiming identity, standing up to, and challenging, racism and reporting abuse and offences to statutory services and organisations, the police, media companies and other authorities. This mode of ‘resistance’ is particularly driven by educated young GTR community members, working closely with community-led NGOs, typically set up by highly experienced women (often with their own grown families) who are determined that their children and grandchildren will not be exposed to the same degree of racism and discrimination as they themselves were.

The work of GATE Herts, the Social Changemakers and a range of other locally based organisations are key examples of such dynamic

practice, and as Josie O’Driscoll, has stated (in conversation, June 2019) a fundamental element of bringing about change within the communities and enhancing a sense of empowerment that enables community members to challenge hate speech and discrimination, is the requirement that activities are ‘community led’, working in partnership with a range of agencies and non-GTR people, but operationalised through ‘community members taking responsibility and speaking up’.

In the final section of this report (which are drawn from and reflect back continually to the findings of this study) we summarise a series of recommendations, which it is proposed may act as a starting point to reduce levels of hate against GTR communities and enhance psychological well-being and a sense of social inclusion, leading, it is hoped, to reduced suicide rates within the GTR communities.

Policy and practice enactments

- To enact the recommendations of the Women and Equalities Committee report (2019) in full in relation to social inclusion of GTR communities. Particular attention to be paid to the Committee's recommendations on education, hate crime, and health.
- To engage robustly through local and national mechanisms and engagement with public and professional bodies, so as to ensure that all statutory services and public authorities are familiar with both the extent of racism, exclusion and discrimination experienced by GTR populations – including also Showmen, New Travellers and Boaters – and their statutory duties in the case of communities included within the Equality Act.
- To ensure that there is a publicly articulated expectation by sector leads and Government spokespersons that racism, bullying and discrimination in school, further and higher educational and employment settings, are treated as robustly as would be other forms of racism.
- To ensure that Gypsy, Traveller and Roma populations are meaningfully included in anti-discrimination training, including in relation to unconscious bias, delivered in professional and practice settings.
- That issues of intersectionality impacting GTR communities, e.g. gender, sexual orientation, disability status, age, caring responsibilities including marital status, etc and also the cultural diversity of 'GTR' communities are taken into account by all statutory bodies and professional services when designing and delivering services.
- To encourage the delivery of specialist training within university and professional curricula pertaining to GTR communities – delivered through community partnerships – for example, via the "Practitioner Programme" hosted by GATE Herts and similar programmes delivered by agencies such as The Traveller Movement and Friends, Families and Travellers, who deliver specialist cultural competence training to social work, education and health students as well as Post Qualification training offering CPD points.
- To request that consideration is made to record the ethnicity of deceased persons within General Registry Office data, and that (in the interim and initially on a trial basis to facilitate research) Coroners record the ethnicity of a person deceased by suicide where they are a member of the GTR communities.

Recommendations pertaining to mental health/wellbeing

- To urgently include Gypsies, Travellers and Roma within the NHS Data Dictionary as has been urged repeatedly over many years, so as to establish a baseline pertaining to GTR physical and mental health and contacts with mental health professionals.
- To ensure that GTR communities are routinely included in local and national Suicide Prevention Plans.
- For the additional risk factors and exacerbated risk of suicide experienced by GTR communities to be incorporated into health professionals' training.
- For MHCLG/Department of Health to commission an in-depth study to identify the prevalence and causative factors of suicide amongst GTR communities, and how these can best be addressed. It is recommended that this should take place in partnership with Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish agencies to enable consideration of variables within the four Nations.
- An overarching Gypsy, Traveller and Roma health strategy incorporating physical and mental health should be developed, which includes appropriate funding to engage with service accessibility (including tailored in-reach relating to bereavement support and mental health provision) and monitors data on contacts and outcomes with services, as well as trialling appropriate interventions to support wellbeing.

- For local health commissioners to engage and work in partnership with GTR mental health professionals, support organisations, Public Health authorities. Public Health England and other key agencies to fund, develop and deliver positive mental health awareness and suicide prevention campaigns aimed explicitly at Gypsy, Traveller, Roma and Showmen communities.
- To identify and urgently seek to upskill GTR community members to train as mental health first aiders and mental health professionals (e.g. counsellors, psychologists, etc.) utilising local health commissioning powers/resources, and encouraging the development of targeted bursaries and grants from universities, professional bodies and charities to support such training opportunities.

Recommendations pertaining to policing/hate crime reporting

- To ensure that police services throughout the country are monitored in relation to policing of and dealing with crimes against GTR communities, including in relation to internal training, arrest and charging decisions pertaining to hate speech/crime.
- To continue to fund and support third-party reporting mechanisms and agencies working to assist GTR, Showman and Boater communities who have experienced hate speech/crime or discrimination.
- For the MoJ to review CPS data on decision making, disposals and outcomes pertaining to individuals who are reported for hate offences against GTR communities.

Public awareness campaigns

- To ensure that there is greater awareness of the extent and illegality of hate speech against GTR communities. That public campaigns, backed up by prosecutions and/or restorative justice disposals are highlighted so that members of the public and professionals are alert to the fact that GTR populations are minority ethnic groups and that negative discourse or hate speech is as unacceptable as when utilised against other BAME populations.
- To enhance awareness amongst GTR communities (particularly in the light of our findings, Irish Travellers, older GTR community members and those most at risk of digital exclusion) of the availability of third-party reporting mechanisms and the availability of assistance in relation to reporting experiences of hate, through Social Changemakers, NGOs etc.
- For media representatives, politicians and community figures to be reminded of expectations of respectful discourse, and standards in public office when commenting on any matters to do with GTR communities.

Education

- To ensure that all schools are aware of and recognise GTR culture, through incorporation of GRT History Month within the school calendar, and information on the communities is incorporated into the national curricula.
- That schools are monitored robustly in relation to reports of bullying, exclusions and also good practice, pertaining to the support of GTR students.

- That GTR cultures, and in particular the risk of racist bullying of pupils, are routinely incorporated into teacher training programmes.

Community-facing activities

- That funding is made available to NGOs and specialist agencies to provide support, and enhance training and employment of GTR community members working in partnership with public sector bodies so as to act as 'community advocates' and 'cultural 'bridges'.
- That there is a sustained effort to develop networks of solidarity between GRT and other BAME and anti-racist organisations to develop understanding of the racisms and exclusions faced by GRT communities so as to enhance solidarity, understanding and partnership working cross culturally between diverse BAME and GRT populations.
- That an enhanced emphasis is embedded into the work of GTR community groups and NGOs in relation to shared exclusions, knowledge exchange and internationalisation of activities with Roma and other Aboriginal/ First Nation and BAME communities and activists (for example Black Lives Matter movements) elsewhere in the world.

In conclusion, although this research outlines a number of troubling findings, and should act as an urgent call to action for policy makers, practitioners, commissioners, statutory services and other agencies, the picture is not entirely bleak. As has been noted by a number of respondents, there is an increasing awareness of the need for action to challenge the 'last acceptable form of racism', and also the emergent development of networks of mutual solidarity and support for GTR communities amongst both specialist BAME and broader anti-racist organisations.

Increasingly, public bodies – including some police services – and a few universities, media representatives and key political actors such as the Mayor of London and the All Party Political Group on GTR affairs, are gaining more traction in both calling for recognition of GTR culture (for example through raising awareness of GTR History Month and the extent of the Roma Holocaust under the

Nazi regime during World War 2) and exposing the depth of prejudice and exclusion GTR populations still face in the UK. In turn increasing members of the public (often, but not always young) are becoming alert to the extent of the racism, discrimination and victimisation experienced by GTR communities and are 'calling out' the use of racist language in broadcast, print and social media contexts.

Most importantly however, the growth of dynamic community led activism and slowly increasing numbers of professionals from amongst the GTR communities working in areas such as education, law, policing and mental health services, must also offer increased hope that in time racist abuse or hate speech against GTR communities, as well as the wide-spread casual institutional racism commented on by many participants, will invoke as much outrage – and draw equally meaningful responses – from both members of the public and public bodies, as when racist slurs are perpetrated against other minority communities.

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Appendices



A pilot research project into the psychological effect of hate crime on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities Information Sheet for Participants

What is the project about?

This small-scale project aims to provide evidence about the experiences of hate crime within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to see if there are any links between hate crime and poor mental health. We are particularly interested in exploring whether experiences of hate crime may also be linked to the high numbers of suicide which occur within GRT communities.

We want to talk to people of all ages, both community members and people who work closely with the communities and have experience or knowledge of both mental health support needs amongst the community and how people experience hate crime. We are also hoping to include children and young people (using age appropriate techniques and questions) to see how widely spread experiences of discrimination and hate crime are for community members and how this may impact their wellbeing.

The project is funded by GATE Herts and linked to their Report Racism service.

What happens if I take part?

Taking part in the project will give you the opportunity to talk about your experiences of hate crime and the impact it has had on you and your family (or community members who you support) in a discussion group (focus group) and /or an individual interview.

Please note that as a result of COVID 19 focus groups and interviews will take place remotely online. If you choose to participate you will be sent a link to join an online focus group or individual interview session.
How long will it take if I agree to take part?

The group discussion or one-to one interview will take between about an hour and a half to two hours (no longer). We will provide you with drinks and snacks during the discussion or interview, and there will be a break if it goes on for more than an hour.

What happens if I change my mind and don't want to take part anymore?

Don't worry! If you decide that the project isn't for you, all you need to do is tell us. We will respect your wishes. You only need to let us know if you are happy for us to use the recording or notes which relate to your interview or part in the group discussion up to the point when you choose to withdraw. If you change your mind, this won't make any difference to the support you get from any of the community groups involved in this project.

Will I get paid for my contribution?

Unfortunately, we don't have enough money to pay anyone to take part in this project, but we will provide refreshments and reasonable travel contributions.

What will happen to the recording of the group meeting or my interview, and any notes or completed questionnaires?

All of the information you give us will be kept confidentially (nobody but the academic and community team members will see any of the information), including your name, address, where you live – even the city you live in. All this information will be stored separately from the information you provide within your interview or group meeting discussion (focus group).

Only the team in charge of the whole project (Professor Greenfields and Dr Carol Rogers) will have access to all of the names and information about who has taken part. You can use a different name/pseudonym if you want when you take part, as we are interested in your story and - we do not need to know WHO you are.

Once we have removed names or any information which can identify you from the written version of the tapes ('the transcripts'), we will destroy the audio tapes, so that there is no risk someone can tell from your voice who you are, or that anyone else can have access to the tapes or know who you are. That means all information you give us is confidential between you, the research team and other people who were in a group meeting.

We will invite the staff member from the community group/NGO where the group interview took place to read the transcript (report of the meeting). This will allow them to tell us if they believe the transcript is accurate and talk to you about the transcript (if you want to know more after the interview has taken place).

You can also get in touch with Margaret Greenfields or Carol Rogers (the people running the project) if you want more information. You can also

complain to someone else at the University if you are not happy with the information about this project you received, or anything which occurred during the interview or the parts of the project you are involved with.

How do I get involved?

If you want to know more or are thinking about taking part in the first place talk to: Dr Carol Rogers or Professor Margaret Greenfields who is overseeing the project, and someone will get back to you and tell you more about how you can become involved in the study. Full ethical approval has been gained from an expert ethics panel at the University before you have been approached to take part in this study.

Carol Rogers Carol.rogers@bucks.ac.uk Phone 01494 522141 ext. 4211

Or

Margaret Greenfields Margaret.greenfields@bucks.ac.uk Phone 01494 522141 ext. 5770

If you have any concerns or complaints about any aspect of the study, please contact the researchers in the first instance using the contact details above. However, if after speaking with the researchers you wish to complain formally you can do this through contacting:

The Research and Enterprise Development (RED) Unit, Buckinghamshire New University, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 2JZ research@bucks.ac.uk.

Normally your complaint will be acknowledged within five working days and answered as soon as possible thereafter.

This research has received ethical approval through Buckinghamshire New University (ref UEP2019Nov01.)



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