

GRTSB Case Study

The issue

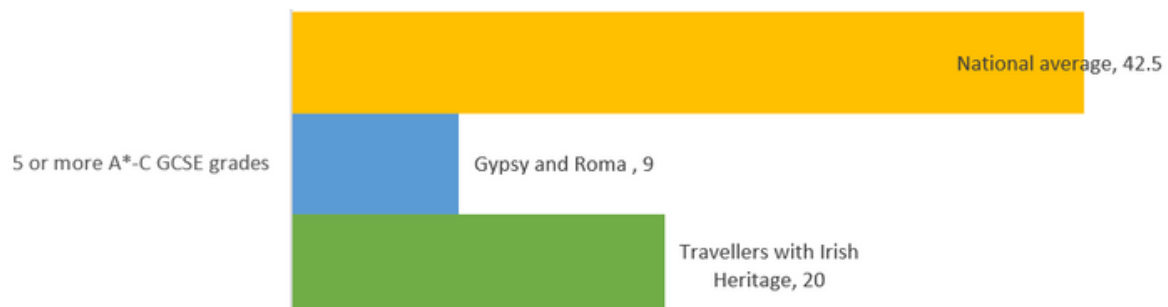
Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman and Boaters (GRTSB) are categorised as a minority ethnic group, whose way of life is nomadic. Other values include the importance of family and community, as well as a preference for self-employment. In the UK there are an estimated 300,000 people who fall into this category¹.

GRTSB is one of the most disadvantaged communities; their life expectancy is much lower than that of the general population, and rates of infant mortality are high. As well as this they are often the victim of racism through the media and are at considerable risk of low attainment at school².

GRTSB pupils were highlighted as being the lowest achieving ethnic group, and the most likely to have special educational needs. Additionally, they were found to be four times more likely to be excluded from school than any other group³.

Research has found that Travellers in York are one of the most marginalised and ignored communities, with experience of significant deprivation⁴. Further research to assess the quality of life for Gypsy Travellers in the York area found that they were limited by issues of overcrowding, access to healthcare services, harassment from the police and poor school attendance⁵.

Educational attendance, engagement and attainment in the travelling community was found to be considerably poor in York. A report found that in 2005 only 20% of Travellers with Irish heritage, and 9% of Gypsy and Roma students attained 5 or more A*-C GCSE grades. This is significantly lower than the national average of 42.5%⁶.



^{1,2} The Traveller Movement, 2021

³ DFES, 2005

^{4,6} Neale, 2008

⁵ Carlisle & Hutton, 1998

Recommendations from the report for how to improve qualification outcomes for Traveller children and raise them up to be in line with non-Traveller children included:⁷

- access to homework clubs
- parental reading schemes
- vocational projects
- meeting the education and employment needs of adult Travellers
- opportunity for alternative learning packages and vocational courses

Further evidence for how Universities and colleges in the York area are looking to improve outcomes for young people in the Traveller community comes from Access and Participation plans.

Within their Access and Participation Plan, York St John University and Uni Connect addressed their priority in 2022-2023 with continuing to fund and evaluate outreach work with the GRTSB young people.

A similar emphasis on continuing to engage in activity to widen participation to individuals from GRTSB communities is mentioned in the University of York Access and Participation Plan.

Askham Bryan College, in their Access and Participation Statement, express that enabling pupils from under-represented groups to access a fulfilling educational experience is their primary aim.

Examples and impact

In order to help young Travellers in the Lincolnshire area access Further Education (FE) colleges as a way into Higher Education (HE) and employment Linc Higher and Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative ran a project with 30 young Travellers to help them achieve 5 Level 2 Prince's Trust Personal Development and Employability Skills Qualifications, which is equivalent to 5 GCSEs. The project was successful in helping the young Travellers to gain 130 Level 2 certificates. Further successes included some of the young Travellers going on to complete Level 3 qualifications and becoming employed.

⁷ Neale, 2008

The structure and success of the Linc Higher and Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative project enabled Inspiring Choices to begin to tackle educational inequality in the Gypsy Roma Traveller community in York. Inspiring Choices have been collaborating with young people in the Travelling community through York Traveller's Trust (YTT) since 2021. Similarly, to Linc Higher and Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative, Inspiring Choices and YTT have been supporting a programme for young Travellers aged 11- 15 to achieve a Prince's Trust Qualification.

Interviews were conducted with the staff and students involved in the Prince's Trust Achieve Programme and the making of the film 'HUMAN'. The young people expressed how much they enjoyed the Achieve Programme, the fact it was different to school but still enabled them to progress to college. It was reported by the students that they had learnt more about **making friends, sports, money management and the process of making a film** through attending the project. Confidence was also mentioned as a positive outcome from attending the sessions.

Additionally, with the same group of young Travellers, Inspiring Choices, Inspired Youth (a not-for-profit Social Enterprise focused on empowering marginalised communities) and York St John University worked together to make a film called 'HUMAN' which explores how it feels to be a young person from the Travelling community living in York. In September 2021 the film began development and was written, featured and narrated entirely by young people. HUMAN premiered in February 2022 at the Everyman cinema in York and was viewed by over 50 people, including local professionals and friends and families of the young people involved. As well as being shown at the Everyman in York, it was also shared widely across social media which has enabled the opportunity for future collaboration between Inspiring Choices, York Traveller's Trust and the young people.



One young Traveller expressed a new ability to think about their future

“

I started thinking about what I want in the future. Before I didn't really think what, I wanted in the future, now I am a bit more.

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They went on to explain that they had the idea they wanted to become a roofer but until the Achieve Programme, they didn't know the path to take to get qualified.

'Before I didn't know how to get into college or anything because I thought not a lot of colleges do what I want to do in the future. But now I've got to go to college and I know what I need to do and everything.'

Below are some quotes that reflect how the staff and parents have found the Achieve Programme:

"I probably thought that they'd be less open to non-Travellers working with them than what they were. I think they're quite accepting of that and kind of get that."

"I kind of went in maybe as a blank slate and I maybe had quite a bit to learn about what it means to be a young Traveller and the experience they face."

"So, I'd say the screening exceeded my expectations. The fact it had such high attendance and the fact that the young people were so engaged and felt so confident to talk in front of that audience. I think that really exceeded my expectations."

"I think one of the other goals of the film was that the young people would be able to use their voice to get their points across to talk about the stigma and their experiences, and ultimately give them more confidence that people do believe in them, and people do understand their position, and I think that that has been fulfilled as well."

"One of them was bullied at school, so he come out of school and came to the Achieve Programme, and then he went through this, he wanted to go back into school, so he tried it a couple of days a week."

It is clear to see that we have had positive feedback from the Achieve Programme, and we aim to continue working in partnership with the Gypsy Roma Traveller Community in York to provide further support to raise educational attainment and outcomes and reduce the inequality between the Travelling community and the non-Travelling community in York.

Inspiring Choices Programme

Inspiring Choices is the York and North Yorkshire partnership for the Uni Connect programme, funded by the Office for Students. Inspiring Choices is here to support young people as they make decisions about their future education and career. Our team is based at York St John University, and we work in schools and colleges across York and North Yorkshire.

We work with young people aged 14 and above and run workshops, activities and trips, all aimed at helping young people think about what they want to do in the future and how they can get there. We also offer 1 to 1 support and bespoke activities for schools and colleges.

Resources

York Travellers Trust

- [Information on the Traveller community in the city of York, as well as findings from a major research project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.](#)

The Traveller Movement

- [Information and guidance for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, parents and students on education, and how to deal with potential barriers, such as, bullying, exclusionary practises and understanding post-16 options.](#)
- ['Find Help' pages](#)

LINCHigher and Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative

- [Report on Widening Access to Higher Education for GRT communities](#)

Office for Students

- [GRT information](#)

Friends, Families and Travellers

- [Services Directory](#)

References

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