

Understanding the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and their experiences of probation

A Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange report

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Acknowledgements

Leeds GATE would first like to acknowledge and say a special thank you to all of the members of the Gypsy and Traveller community who participated in the surveys and sharing of their views and experiences. This project could not have happened without your input and we are extremely grateful for you trusting us to take part.

We would like to thank the Probation Service Yorkshire and The Humber for providing Leeds GATE the opportunity to run this pilot consultation project and form positive relationships, with the shared goal to improve not just individual experiences of probation, but with an overall aim to improve the lives of Gypsies and Travellers.

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Introduction

Who are Leeds GATE?

Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange, known more commonly as Leeds GATE, was first established in 2003 in the Leeds area. GATE is a vibrant and brave grassroots organisation led by Gypsy and Traveller people in partnership with others in and across West Yorkshire. Please note that Leeds GATE is set up to work with the Gypsy and Traveller community and currently do not work with the Roma community. Throughout this report where possible we will refer to the community we work with as Gypsy and Traveller (G & T).

Gypsy and Traveller communities

Irish Travellers - can be traced back to the 12th century as an indigenous population of Ireland and began migrating to Britain from the 19th century for work and family life. They may refer to themselves as Pavee or Minceir. Irish Travellers are recognised as an ethnic minority group in UK Law (Race Relations Act 2000 and Equalities Act 2010)

Romany Gypsy - a group or groups of people who left India over a thousand years ago and dispersed across the globe. Along the way they were defined (usually by others) as being 'Egyptian' and this has become shortened to Gypsy. Gypsy people began appearing in UK records in the 16th century, and have made lives here for hundreds of years.

Romany is the word that Gypsy people in England and Wales apply to themselves, hence the term 'Romany Gypsy'. Romany Gypsies are recognised as an ethnic minority group in UK law (Race Relations Act 2000 and Equalities Act 2010).

Leeds GATE currently work with over 800 Gypsy and Traveller community members across West Yorkshire and those passing through. The Leeds GATE staff team work tirelessly to address issues which affect the homes, health, education, employment and circumstances of Gypsy and Traveller people and we have a strong reputation of getting things done on the behalf of our members.

Gypsies and Travellers make up only 0.1% of the population in the UK, however the community have some of the poorest outcomes and experience more racism and exclusion than any other ethnicity.

Gypsies and Travellers in the Criminal Justice System

There is very limited research and information on Gypsy and Traveller experiences in the criminal justice system and probation services. From our work over the past 6 months, participants have presented with some limited understanding of the different services that fall under the criminal justice system and different roles they all have to play e.g. police, probation, courts, CPS etc. There are assumptions that all these services are there solely to prosecute.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons 2014's findings paper 'People in prison: Gypsies, Romany and Travellers' states, "Individuals within Gypsy, Romany and Traveller communities sometimes hold perceptions that the criminal justice system serves permanently settled communities better, resulting in mistrust of criminal justice agencies.

There is evidence of reluctance to access criminal justice services, even after being a victim of crime, due to previous negative experiences."

Our consultation project was set up with the aim to capture experiences of individuals of the Probation Service, and highlight how they may impact on their overall experience of the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

The Lammy Review 2017 highlighted that Gypsies and Travellers made up 5% of all male prisoners in the UK, 6% of all female prisoners, and 8% of the women at HMP New Hall identified as GRT, despite the prison only knowing of one individual. These figures are alarmingly high for a group that make up such a small amount of the UK population.

Project Context

Between January 2022 and July 2022, Leeds GATE undertook a consultation project with West Yorkshire's Gypsy and Traveller people in order to establish their experiences of probation; their dreams, aspirations and their solutions to issues. The project was conducted via a survey and consultation which were pre-approved by the Probation Service with the plan to interview 25 individuals.

The aim of the project was to improve the experiences of the community, while under the supervision of probation and support probation staff to have a better understanding of the community and their needs. The information gathered from these consultations

informed our community recommendations for the Probation Service to take into account moving forward.

Extensive work was carried out prior to completing the surveys to raise awareness of the project and to attain participants via social media and visiting other partners and services. Local prisons were also contacted and all GATE staff across our different departments spoke with members about the opportunity to be involved.

Early conversations and questions between the Probation Service and GATE focused on whether members of the community share their ethnicity with probation.

The below table presents the data (as of 9th August 2022) for the current numbers of people currently in the Probation Service in West Yorkshire and capturing the people who have identified as GRT (Gypsy, Roma, Traveller).

	In the community	In Custody (OMiC)	In Custody (COM)	TOTAL
Yorkshire and Humber	20,048	3461	4989	28,498
Leeds	3375 GRT-22	618 GRT-3	923 GRT-8	4916 Grt-33
Bradford & Calderdale	3673 GRT-13	573 GRT-4	851 GRT-2	5087 GRT-19
Wakefield	1366 GRT-14	196 GRT-2	291 GRT-3	1853 GRT-19
Kirklees	1495 GRT-6	330 GRT-1	407 GRT-2	2232 GRT-9

Barriers

From working with the community we knew that the data identifying Gypsy and Traveller people in the Probation Service was already low. However, during our consultations the data collected was even lower than expected, raising the question of members of the community choosing not to disclose their ethnicity.

As a service with a trusted working relationship with Gypsy and Traveller communities, we were somewhat surprised at some of the reluctance of members to participate and the barriers that we faced. This was seen more so with members in the community

rather than those that were in custody. There was a sense that people in the community wanted to remain private about any experience they have had with probation, and we are aware that confidentiality can be a huge worry among the community. However, the individuals in custody were able to provide insight from inside the criminal justice system and current or previous experiences of probation and on release.

Clear insight to this project and it's aims were provided when talking to the community, as well as highlighting their information will be kept anonymous. However a lot of the members were still concerned where the information from these surveys would go with one even stating: **"I'm not a grass."**

It is of importance to note that while completing the surveys, the participants often strayed from the topic of the Probation Service to their time spent in custody where they had particularly negative experiences. This also highlighted the difficulties members of the community have in distinguishing between bodies of the criminal justice system.

Despite GATE already being aware and working with individuals who we know have experienced probation, when asked if they would participate in this project, they chose not to disclose to us any current or previous involvement with the probation service. Many members of the community perceive the Probation Service to be part of the police and therefore were reluctant to have any involvement. As mentioned earlier in the report, there presents some lack of understanding of the services roles and would be recommended that probation help communicate how probation differs with the police.

This lack of trust in the police highlighted the need for the community to be engaged in conversations around their experiences of policing and what impact this has had on accessing other services within the CJS. This is something that we feel should be explored with a practitioner as part of their license/order.

With our aim to survey 25 individuals, we worked to reach out to as many members who are already signed up to GATE and also their families, as well as offer this opportunity to prisons. By the end of the project, we were able to complete 16 surveys.

Age	21-30 6 participants	31-40 2 participants	41-50 6 participants	51-60 2
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Ethnicity	Irish Traveller 8	Romany Gypsy 8
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Gender	Male 14	Female 2
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Findings

Roadside & Fixed (Settled) Addresses

When considering that being on Licence or a Home Detention Curfew requires a fixed address, we thought it necessary to discuss with participants how this may have affected their supervision. We were also keen to discuss how supervision in general affected their culture in the way of being able to live a nomadic lifestyle.

We found that 12.5% (2) of the participants were living roadside at the time of their supervision. One member reports that he was told by the courts to live at a 'settled' address to complete his order. This was something that he didn't want to do due to living roadside most of his life. However, he followed the requirements to live at a settled fixed address and has been separated from his family in doing so until his order has finished.

A potential solution would be to explore the individual's situation and well-being regarding their relationships to family, friends and any impact that may occur from being separated from their network. Throughout an order, revisit if there are any options to move closer to their support network.

Several of the participants shared that despite living at a fixed address, it was difficult to attend appointments with probation. Nomadic living can still be a vitally important part of people's lives, especially when needing to travel for work or for cultural reasons. Probation workers should explore this with individuals and the potential impact on their order.

One individual surveyed was told as part of their license they were not allowed to leave the area where they had been placed when released from prison, isolating them to an area where they had no family or support.

The community have very strong family connections, so this should be considered when thinking about where someone will live during their order/license.

A common theme discussed and shared was what can be and should be used as 'settled' address. Many individuals may have family that own pieces of private land, that have planning permission to have people reside on the site. Otherwise, private yards may currently be going through the planning process during which families may be able to reside on the land.

Awareness of Ethnicity

In view of the low figures from the data provided from Probation about current numbers of GRT people in their service, and non-disclosure of their ethnicity by community members, we wanted to establish:

If their Probation Practitioner knew, was the question asked, was there any barriers to disclosing and why they think they might not have been asked.

Practitioner aware of ethnicity- 14	Not aware- 2
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In regards to whether they were asked by their practitioner-

3 (18.75%) individuals were asked	4 (25%) told the practitioner without being asked	1 (6.25%) reported that the police had informed their practitioner	4 (25%) Reported already on the probation system	4 (25%) reported that they didn't want to disclose their ethnicity for fear of being 'treated differently and judged'
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One female member reports that she had to disclose due to fear of being around other Traveller men which went against their culture. She reports that this was dealt with fairly by her practitioner.

When asked if they faced any barriers to sharing their identity. 56% (9) of the participants reported no barriers to sharing their ethnicity with their Probation Practitioner, with statements such as '**I was happy to share**' and **I'm not ashamed**'.

Although this is positive, it highlights the issue of members of the community not disclosing, with the remaining seven (44%) stating they did face barriers. As captured above, four individuals felt the main barrier was the fear of being treated differently. Another example shared was the length of the appointments being too short to discuss their ethnicity and felt like the practitioner didn't really want to know.

Levels of Literacy

Some of the community can experience lower levels of literacy, due to fewer young people attaining secondary, further and higher education. It was therefore of importance to ascertain how this may have affected their experience of supervision.

Many Gypsy and Traveller children leave school at around the age of 11 and therefore do not receive secondary education. They have poor experience of the education system due to bullying, harassment and racism by both fellow students and sometimes teachers who have low expectations of them. Employment rates are low and poverty is high. ('Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities: 2009 A review' - University of Bristol, Buckinghamshire New University, Friends Families and Travellers).

31.5% (5) of the participants report to have struggles with reading and writing. The findings of how their practitioners helped with this were mainly of a positive outcome.

One member reports that he couldn't read or write when released from custody. When his practitioner realised, he sought help for him. He says that some of his actual probation appointments were lessons and the result of this is that he can now read and write.

50% (3) of those that struggle with literacy report that their practitioner helped them to fill in any paperwork. Only one member reports that after advising his practitioner of his struggles, that they didn't help at all.

Culture and cultural needs explored

Gypsies and Travellers possess a rich heritage and culture that differs in many ways to those of a non Gypsy and Traveller. These communities are very proud of their roots. When considering how restrictions may impact culture, we wanted to establish how any supervision may have been managed in line with their cultural needs.

Asked about their culture or cultural needs- 6	Never asked about their culture or cultural needs- 10
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One member reports that he brought in some books and leaflets about Gypsies and Travellers for the practitioner to read but feels that they shouldn't have had to do this and that the practitioner should have already had this information.

“In the first meeting, I feel my probation worker should have explored more about what being a Traveller meant to me and showing willingness to understand, as this then helps quickly build trust. The basic understanding of the Gypsy and Traveller way of life is key to the relationship between service user and practitioner.” - Research participant

One member reports that “She (practitioner) was good and understood. In the past there have been some that don't understand”. Another member states that her practitioner was very considerate of her culture.

When asked **“What would help to discuss culture in appointments” members wanted:**

- To be asked about their culture and cultural needs. One person did not want to discuss his culture, as he felt that it is him that has ‘done wrong’ and not the culture.
- For practitioners to already have more understanding of their culture and heritage.

50% of participants report that they didn't feel that their practitioner understood their heritage and background and felt that they needed to be more educated to be able to better manage sentences and orders in line with their culture. One member states that his practitioner asked him why he would want to live in a caravan when he can live in a house.

“It was never discussed and I was never asked. It would help if they were bothered.” - Research participant

“He treated me fairly. He understood and helped me.” - Research participant

Prejudice, racism or discrimination

Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most marginalised communities and continue to experience high levels of overt racial discrimination and hostility from society. ‘The last acceptable form of racism’ report by The Traveller Movement in 2017 found 91% of participants had experienced discrimination and 77% had experienced hate speech or hate crime.

Our members at Leeds GATE also experience racism and discrimination on a very regular basis. This highlights why members of the community choose to not disclose their ethnicity inside the criminal justice system, and to probation, for fear of judgment and discrimination. The community can be very reluctant to report racism and hate crime as it has become part of their regular experiences and they don’t think that anything will be done about it.

“I have told him I don’t think he likes me because I’m a Traveller. He said this isn’t true.” - Participant

We asked all participants if they had ever discussed racism with their practitioner. 81.25% (13) of the participants report that they had not discussed racism, prejudice or discrimination with their practitioner for the main reason being that they were “never asked”. This could be due to a lack of understanding of Gypsy and Traveller being ethnic groups protected under law.

One individual stated that while he did disclose the racism that he was experiencing in custody to his practitioner, he was advised that he should report it to his personal officer in the prison. This participant felt that his practitioner should have advocated on his behalf on this matter. The same participant upon release never felt that there was enough time in the appointments to discuss and explore this experience.

One participant thought that the practitioner wouldn't be interested, while another reports that they wouldn't discuss this subject due to a 'lack of understanding on the culture'.

“It’s important to be one of the first questions (racism) that they ask so that they are aware of what’s going on.” - Research participant

“Assumptions of Gypsy and Traveller being white British needs to change.” - Research participant

“Due to the short appointments, I never felt there was time to discuss racism and the impact this had on me and still does.” - Research participant

Experience of fair treatment

Gypsies and Travellers often feel that they are treated differently by services, in comparison to the none Gypsy and Traveller community, and struggle to build trusting relationships with professionals, staff and services. The surveys & People in prison, Gypsies, Romany and Travellers findings paper 2014 by HM Inspectorate of Prisons states “There is a sense amongst the community that those in authority or services do not understand their culture.”

“They don’t understand how I speak or my background.” - Research participant

When our participants were asked if they felt that they had been treated fairly while under supervision:

6 participants reported that they felt that they were treated differently due to their culture.	10 feel they were treated fairly
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Out of the 6 participants that feel they were not treated fairly, 4 felt this was due to their ethnicity.

*“I always had a feeling I would be recalled for being a Traveller.” -
Research participant*

*“My appointments were never relaxed, they kept me at 3 per week
all the way through. I definitely got treated differently for being a
Traveller.” - Research participant*

*“I felt my background wasn’t taken into consideration when I was
released. I was never offered an option to go into a caravan. It was
either a hostel or family address.” - Research participant*

Resettlement Requirements

A Gypsy and Traveller lifestyle can differ greatly to that of the none Gypsy and Traveller community. Living in a caravan or taking off to travel is part of deep rooted culture and identity which still applies if people move into settled accommodation.

Gypsies and Travellers living in houses, also known as ‘bricks and mortar’ has been proven to significantly impact both mental and physical health. Due to the different lifestyle on the road, moving in to housing can leave people inexperienced with general tenancy and housing management skills such as paying bills & rent and accessing the correct benefits. An individual can feel trapped and claustrophobic which further impacts their mental health and emotional wellbeing. Housing a Gypsy or Traveller in an area that is hostile to the community can cause neighbourhood disputes (Good practice: briefing Gypsies and Travellers by Shelter 2007).

When considering this information, we thought it necessary to establish how resettlement needs differ from the none Gypsy Traveller community.

All participants except for one state that the resettlement requirements of Gypsies and Travellers are different to none Gypsies and Travellers. 12 of the 16 surveyed feel that living in a caravan was not taken into consideration.

A clear theme was the shared concerns around not being able to travel out of area or not being able to live roadside due to licence restrictions.

Three of the participants wanted to live roadside but were unable to due to restrictions from their license. Gypsy and Traveller communities possess strong family networks which often form part of their reasons for travelling, and the need to be around relatives. People may need to travel if a family member is ill. Funerals are very important occasions in the community and it is a priority for them to attend.

*“Making people stay where they don’t want to causes problems.” -
Research participant*

*“I would like to be roadside again but I’m not allowed.” - Research
participant*

Some suggestions on how probation could meet these resettlement requirements:

- Ask us where we are going and give us a map of probation offices to check in while on route
- Some appointments to be video calls if we need to travel
- Appointments in different towns of even police stations to check in to
- Allow us to live roadside in the town where our license covers

Unpaid work

In order to establish as many aspects as possible of the participants experience of their supervision, we asked whether unpaid work was a part of their sentence.

11 completed unpaid work	5 did not complete any unpaid work
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36% (6) of those who had completed unpaid work reported problems and 12 report no problems. Of those that did report difficulties:

Two reported that they were given custodial sentences for not completing their hours, with one feeling that this had only happened to him in comparison to others who did not attend because he is a Traveller.

One participant states that his experience was “horrible” and that he had been made to do the work of six people and was told by the unpaid work supervisor “You will be used to climbing on roofs and in people’s gardens”.

In comparison to the above, one participant reports that he was given the hours during the pandemic at which time his son was born at 24 weeks into his partners pregnancy. He didn’t attend to protect his baby. His practitioner was understanding of this and referred it back to court to be removed.

Another participant reports that she was treated fairly and they helped her to complete her hours quicker.

Positive experiences

Although it is evident that Gypsy and Traveller people have certainly experienced difficulties under supervision of the Probation Service, good experiences were also highlighted. When asked what was good about their supervision, we received a mixture of responses.

5 (31%) state that there was nothing good about their experience	11 (69%) reported some good experiences
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“I was treated fairly and wasn’t pushed into anything. I learnt to read.” - Research participant

“She was understanding and we had a laugh. She was interested in my culture.” - Research participant

“I was given flexibility if late or missed an appointment.” - Research participant

Improvements and Solutions

A key part of this project it was to establish solutions from the Gypsy and Traveller community to the barriers they face while under supervision of the Probation Service. It was essential to ask the participants what improvements they think should happen.

From those surveyed, there was a definitive ask of the practitioners and service as a whole to show a better understanding of Gypsy and Traveller cultures.

11 (68.75%) of the participants asked would like to see improvements around understanding and knowledge of the Gypsy and Traveller background, heritage and culture.

“Having posters around the probation offices, to show that we are welcome and that the Probation Service works with the community.”

Research participant

“Its 2022 and they should all have training about Gypsies and Travellers.” Research participant

“The most important thing would be to train new starters on how to talk to Travellers and about their culture. There needs to be more understanding.” Research participant

“Maybe have more workshops around the country so it would be easier for women from the GRT community.” - Research participant

Recommendations

Although this consultation project has highlighted some of the positive experiences that the Gypsy and Traveller community experience within the Probation Service, it has captured some of the difficulties and barriers that they face. These are not findings in isolation, but mirror the barriers to accessing services and facilities across many other areas of society.

Despite limited research of Gypsies and Travellers experience of the Criminal Justice System, in general there is growing evidence that these systems are not set up to serve the communities needs. Below are the recommendations gained from this report pulling together the information provided from our participants experiences, as well as knowledge and expertise of staff at Leeds GATE.

Training

Gypsy and Traveller communities evidently feel that their culture and heritage is not fully understood in the Probation Service. The community are often isolated from the rest of society due to fear of discrimination. Gypsies and Travellers do live a different life in many ways to the rest of society and it is important that their needs are met and culture understood.

The community have themselves expressed in this research project that they would like probation staff to have a better understanding of their culture in order to be able to improve their experiences while under supervision. This would then consequently result in better working relationships and outcomes. It is therefore recommended that practitioners carry out some form of individual learning or group training in regard to the background, heritage and culture of Gypsies and Travellers. Probation staff can also refer to the 'Ten Minute Guide' produced by Leeds GATE as a part of this project, when working with members of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

What would help to discuss culture in appointments”:

- Generally, people wanted to be asked about their culture and cultural needs. One person did not want to discuss his culture, as he felt that it is him that has 'done wrong' and not the culture.
- Explain better why discussing someone's culture is important in order to support and understand them, rather than it being about their offence
- For practitioners to already have more understanding of their culture and heritage.

Discuss Racism

As highlighted earlier in this report, a large percentage of the participants were not given the opportunity to explore racism. When working with a member of the Gypsy or Traveller community it is likely that they will have experienced some form racism or hate crime whether from the public or other services. The trust in a service or professional is key to forming a positive relationship. A lack of willingness to explore these experiences and limited understanding of the impact could lead to issues with engagement and compliance with their sentence.

This project has highlighted the want of the community to be able to discuss this topic with their Probation Practitioners. There may be ways that probation staff can assist with reporting such occurrences and provide emotional support. It is good practice to be aware of the negative experiences that the community face as a whole. Make appointments welcoming to them by giving every opportunity to explore views and experiences on the matter.

Understanding about living in caravans & travelling needs

For many families and individuals from the Gypsy and Traveller community, a part of their heritage and culture is to live in a caravan, more commonly known to the community as 'trailers'. This may be roadside, on council run sites or private yards. This way of living is deep rooted in the community and is to many the only way of life they have ever known.

Moving into houses/flats (brick and mortar) for some can have negative impacts on their wellbeing of a Gypsy or Traveller. They may struggle to cope and manage the tenancy and develop poor mental and physical health. There are many Gypsies and Travellers that live in houses, often due to a lack of insufficient pitches and sites. However, being able to travel (nomadism) with their caravans and families is an incredibly important part of their culture and heritage.

It is recommended that practitioners have understanding of individual needs around accommodation and travelling and what it means to Gypsy and Traveller people. Explore how they have travelled over the years and take this into account with their license or order.

Note back to the suggestions under the resettlement requirements section:

- Ask us where we are going and give us a map of probation offices to check in while on route
- Some appointments to be video calls if we need to travel
- Appointments in different towns or even police stations to check in to
- Allow us to live roadside in the town where our license covers

Provide more time to explore release accommodation needs and address all options

Many of the participants of this research project expressed concerns in regard to release from custody addresses. Some shared how they have had to move to the addresses of family and friends and lived in places that they haven't wanted to.

Anyone living roadside is classed as statutory homeless. Upon release or towards the end of their order, it would be good practise to explore the individual's accommodation plans for the future and what support they may still need after leaving a probation hostel or families house. Do they need support to develop future skills to manage a tenancy.

There are long waiting lists for most council run sites across the country and very little available long-term stopping land. In addition to council sites, there are private sites across towns and cities, whether this be owned by a family or privately owned to rent pitches to the community.

Some of these private yards may have families residing on them that may not have a postcode, due to going through processes of planning or awaiting address to be agreed to by local councils. It is recommended that probation staff spend the time speaking to local councils and planning departments to explore the eligibility of these potential sites for someone under probation to reside.

Even though they may have lived in a house or flat before, it may not have been a positive experience or an option the individual chose. Someone may choose to still stay in caravan on a driveway or yard of a family members brick and mortar house, thus meaning they currently reside at a fixed address.

It is important to remember that living in a caravan is an important part of the Gypsy and Traveller culture. Not being able to do so may impact their wellbeing and could subsequently affect compliance with sentences. If a member of the community is staying somewhere that they are not happy for the purpose of their sentence it is likely to cause ill feeling towards the sentence.

Explore their experience of prison sentences and the police

While conducting this consultation project many of the participants often strayed the conversation to the negative experiences of being in custody. This highlighted that there are some struggles to differentiate between probation and prisons.

It is advised to discuss with members of the community what their experiences of prison were like, and work to capture how negative experiences may impact on trust in their relationship with the Probation Service. Support should be provided to address these experiences in prison, such as helping to report them if appropriate.

It would be key to spend further time looking at how the community, link prisons with probation and help to provide the clear differences. Lack of trust in the police highlights the need to engage the community in conversations around their experiences of the police and the impact on accessing other services within the Criminal Justice System. We feel this should be explored with a practitioner as part of their license/order.

Understanding importance of travelling to attend events such as funerals

A strength of the community is their strong support network and connection to their families. It is part of their culture and of great importance to attend events such as weddings, christenings, holy communions and more so funerals.

An article by Travellers Times 'My Grandfather's coffin came home to our house' states, "For Gypsies and Travellers, having a funeral is the final part of saying goodbye to somebody that they have loved. A funeral is the last thing that we can do for our loved ones, and the last time that we can show them how much they meant to us.

Gypsies and Travellers have the poorest health outcomes than any other ethnicity, with the average life expectancy of 50 in comparison to 79 of a none Gypsy or Traveller person. (Women and Equalities Committee 2019). It is not uncommon for families and individuals to attend many important funerals throughout their lives.

When working with a member of the Gypsy and Traveller community, it is recommended to take this into consideration should there be a need for the person to travel for such an occasion and to adapt appointments to enable this part of their culture. There are also many other Gypsy and Traveller events across the UK, usually in the summer time such as Appleby Horse Fair with travel on the road sometimes taking a number of weeks. Events and traditions such as this should also be taken into consideration.

Welcoming to GRT

At the request of the Gypsy and Traveller community it has been requested that the probation offices are made more GRT friendly and welcoming to them. This has been suggested by displaying posters on the wall to say that they are welcome and any art work that can be displayed that captures nomadism.

This can also be done by having a broader knowledge of the culture in appointments and discussing their background and heritage. It may be good practice to offer longer appointments to address low literacy skills when there is paper work to be completed and showing an understanding that they may struggle to read and write.

Gypsies and Travellers are proud of the heritage and ethnicity. If asked, they are generally happy to discuss their background and culture providing that they aren't treated as a novelty. Too many questions and a 'fascination' may make them disengage. It is important to have a balance of interest and respect.

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[HTTPS://WWW.TRAVELLERSTIMES.ORG.UK/FEATURES/MY-GRANDFATHERS-COFFIN-CAME-HOME-OUR-HOUSE-GYPSY-AND-TRAVELLER-FUNERALS#:~:TEXT=FOR%20GYPSIES%20AND%20TRAVELLERS%2C%20HAVING,MUCH%20THEY%20MEANT%20TO%20US.](https://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/features/my-grandfathers-coffin-came-home-our-house-gypsy-and-traveller-funerals#:~:TEXT=FOR%20GYPSIES%20AND%20TRAVELLERS%2C%20HAVING,MUCH%20THEY%20MEANT%20TO%20US)