

Summary of the submissions received for the revised National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy.

Introduction

In June 2015, the Department of Justice and Equality (DOJE) invited interested parties to make submissions on a revised National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS) which is being developed in response to the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.¹

The initial round of consultation undertaken by the DOJE sought to identify priority themes to be addressed in the revised NTRIS. The consultation document proposed three cross cutting themes: data collection and ethnic identifiers; anti-discrimination and anti-racism and; gender, LGBT. Along with these cross cutting themes seven specific themes were suggested: accommodation, cultural identity, education, employment, family and children, health and political participation. The consultation posed three questions for submissions to respond to:

1. Should the themes suggested underpin the next NTRIS and what are your views on each of these themes?
2. Were there other themes that should be included?
3. Within the list of themes, which were the priorities?

In total, 38 submissions were received from local and national Traveller organisations, Roma organisations, Traveller Health Units (THU), health stakeholders, children representatives and education stakeholders².

The content of the submissions varied greatly. Many of the submissions outlined very detailed actions that should be initiated under each theme whilst others offered a broader overview of the work that was currently being undertaken by stakeholders. It may be appropriate for some of the actions outlined in the more detailed submissions to be integrated into later phases of the development process for the revised NTRIS.

A number of overarching points were perceived as being integral to the success of the revised NTRIS throughout the submissions. Four key points were reiterated by the majority of submissions:

- The strategy should have an implementation plan which includes a clear timeline.
- The strategy should be supported by a monitoring and evaluation framework which includes quantitative and qualitative indicators.

¹ The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies was adopted by the European Commission in 2011 and focuses on four key pillars: education, employment, healthcare and housing.

² A complete list is available in appendix A

- The strategy needs to be resourced if it is to result in meaningful change.
- Traveller and Roma organisations should be consulted throughout the development process and in overseeing the implementation of the strategy.

It was suggested that the ‘10 Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion’³ should inform both the development and the implementation of the revised NTRIS.

Many submissions queried the role and position of Traveller Interagency Groups (TIGS) in light of the revised strategy. Concerns were expressed about the functionality of TIGS particularly around accountability and governance. There was a concern about the independence and autonomy of Traveller organisations if their role is to ‘design and deliver projects identified by TIGS’. It was suggested that the work of TIGS should be restructured to include work plans with clear achievable strategies and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Inevitably given the comparably small number of groups working with Roma in Ireland and the difference in population size between the two communities fewer submissions concentrated on the Roma community. The submissions received noted the importance of recognising that whilst many of the challenges faced by the Traveller and Roma communities were similar, each community also had unique and distinct challenges which needed to be considered and addressed through the revised strategy. In some areas there would need to be clear and specific actions for Travellers and Roma which should be resourced accordingly.

Proposed Themes

There was widespread support for all of the themes proposed, seven submissions considered all of the themes equally important. None of the submissions received suggested the removal of any of the proposed themes.

³ The Common Basic Principles were presented for the first time at the meeting of the European Platform for Roma inclusion in Prague on 24 April 2009. On 8 June 2009 the Council of Ministers in charge of Social Affairs annexed the Principles to their conclusions and invited Member States and the Commission to take them into account. The Ten Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion are:

1. Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies
2. Explicit but not exclusive targeting
3. Inter-cultural approach
4. Aiming for the mainstream
5. Awareness of gender dimension
6. Transfer of evidence-based policies
7. Use of European Union instruments
8. Involvement of regional and local authorities
9. Involvement of civil society
10. Active participation of Roma

Cross Cutting Themes

Data Collection and Ethnic Identifier

The majority of submissions noted the importance of this theme and emphasised the need to collect data disaggregated by ethnicity across all administrative systems. Further to this, any system of data collection should be transparent and voluntary, and not overly intrusive or disproportionate to the aim pursued. The collection of data should be carried out with due respect for the principles of confidentiality, informed consent, and voluntary self-identification of persons as belonging to a particular group. Training of frontline staff on the need and implementation of ethical data collection is crucial for the outcome of 'safe' self-identification.

Further to this, Irish Travellers should be recognised by the state as a minority ethnic group in Ireland. Ethnic recognition should pave the way for greater inclusion of the Traveller community in Irish society.

Ethnic identifiers should be included in the administrative systems of all statutory agencies and government departments to ensure the collection of accurate data. Any data collected should be used in accordance with data protection laws to inform policy makers on health, education, employment, housing and anti-discrimination using a human rights and equality framework. While recognising the importance of ethnic identifiers and the collection of data on Traveller and Roma children, we need to be careful to avoid labelling and categorising children and young people who are firstly 'children'.

The data should be collected, disaggregated and analysed to monitor access, participation and the impact of services for Travellers and Roma and to inform policy and practise. Evidenced based interventions can then be used to address identified inequalities. The current racial classifications on the Irish Census household forms do not include a Roma category; therefore there is little data on the Roma community living in Ireland.

Only one submission expressed uncertainty about the collection of ethnic data suggesting alternatively a country of origin question for Roma.

Key considerations:

- Data disaggregated by ethnicity should be collected across all statutory agencies and government departments within a human rights framework.
- The data collected should be used to monitor and evaluate the impact of existing policies and strategies and to inform the development of new policies or strategies.
- Data should be collated and analysed in a timely manner and made available to relevant stakeholders including Traveller and Roma civil society.

Anti- Discrimination and Anti-Racism

Across all submissions discrimination was noted as one of the most significant challenges faced by Traveller and Roma communities. Submissions referred to both the discrimination faced by Travellers and Roma in their everyday lives and the ongoing experience of institutional discrimination. State recognition of Travellers as a minority ethnic group was repeatedly referenced as being integral to addressing discrimination.

It was considered important that the revised NTRIS acknowledge that Travellers and Roma have experienced and continue to experience institutional discrimination in Ireland and across Europe. To address this legacy targeted measures should be introduced across all themes which support Traveller and Roma inclusion. Further to this all public service staff should receive anti- racism and cultural awareness training and racist incident reporting should be encouraged and supported within public bodies.

The current portrayal or representation of Travellers and Roma in the media was considered to support and in some cases encourage negative stereotypes about Travellers and Roma, fuelling prejudice and discrimination in wider society. Legislation designed to address this i.e. the Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 was widely regarded as inadequate in addressing racism and discriminatory language. The near impossibility of securing a conviction under 'Incitement to Hatred' legislation means that the legislation is regarded as effectively meaningless.

The absence of mechanisms to effectively address and challenge 'hate speech' and 'Incitement to Hatred' on social media is a significant issue. Cases where Facebook had been used to incite violence e.g. the attacks on Roma families in Waterford in 2014, have been impossible to address, failure to prosecute the individuals involved effectively sanctioned the racism and related violence.

A number of submissions advocated the development of a new National Action Plan against Racism which included Travellers and Roma as a key action which could be undertaken to address the racism and discrimination faced by Travellers and Roma.

The ability to access redress mechanisms in a timely and accessible manner was considered integral to combating discrimination in wider society. Section 19 of the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003 was raised as a serious concern as it had made access to redress mechanisms when Travellers faced discrimination in public houses particularly difficult. The significant reduction in the number of cases taken since the act was introduced was presented as evidence of the inaccessibility of the current system.

Key considerations:

- State recognition of Travellers as a minority ethnic group.
- Address media representations of Traveller and Roma and possible redress mechanisms.

- Targeted measures to address institutional discrimination and ensure Traveller and Roma inclusion across all themes.
- Training in anti-racism and cultural awareness for all staff in the public services including government departments.
- Development of a new National Action Plan against Racism which includes Traveller and Roma.

Gender and LGBT

There was widespread agreement about the inclusion of this theme. Every policy and strategic measure should be equality and gender proofed to take into account the specific needs of Traveller and Roma women, men and LGBT members. Targeted, well-resourced measures are needed to address gender inequality in both communities. A significant number of submissions suggested that this theme be split into its two component parts given the importance of each element.

Gender

Submissions pointed to the importance of addressing gender inequality in a comprehensive manner and cautioned against adopting a mainstreaming approach as a perceived 'cure all'.

The importance of addressing intersectionality within this theme was emphasized. Discrimination is often experienced most acutely by Traveller and Roma women, key areas that were highlighted were the impact of existing policies on maternal health, on women experiencing gender based violence and women living in poverty. Further to this Traveller/Roma and gender proofing policies was perceived as a necessity in successfully addressing gender inequalities.

Culturally appropriate initiatives are needed to address domestic and sexual violence experienced by Traveller and Roma women. It was recommended that programs which work to combat and address gender based violence in both the Traveller and Roma communities should be resourced and supported under the revised strategy.

The importance of addressing gender inequalities from the perspective of women was highlighted however a number of submissions made reference to the fact that this theme should not ignore Traveller and Roma men's experience of marginalisation. It was felt that attention needed to be given to the particular areas of Traveller men in the areas of unemployment and mental health. Many submissions sought specific actions to positively and pro-actively engage with Traveller men to alleviate these inequalities. The suggested vehicle for both of these concerns was positive horse care initiatives that could incorporate job skills training, education and mental health awareness classes.

Key considerations:

- A comprehensive response to gender inequality, which does not focus solely on gender mainstreaming.

- Gender and Traveller/Roma proofing all existing and future policies to address the multiple discriminations faced by Traveller and Roma women.

LGBT

There was consensus that this theme should be included although it was proposed that it might be better placed as a specific issue rather than as a cross cutting theme. Similar to inputs under the gender theme, concern was expressed about the acute experience of discrimination faced by LGBT Roma and Travellers as a marginalised minority within a marginalised community.

Linkages between LGBT organisations and Traveller and Roma organisations are needed to create inclusive projects and supports that are culturally appropriate for LGBT Travellers and Roma. These projects could undertake proactive actions to address internal and external homophobia in both the Traveller and Roma communities.

It was suggested that the implementation of specific, targeted health initiatives for LGBT Travellers and Roma, conducted by health professionals trained to their specific needs would be beneficial.

Key considerations:

- Promote and support links between Traveller groups and LGBT organisations with a view to developing programmes to support LGBT Travellers and Roma.

Key Themes

Accommodation

All of the submissions highlighted the urgency of the situation with regards to accommodation for Travellers and Roma. Housing and accommodation are critical social determinants impacting on the health and wellbeing of Traveller and Roma families. Accommodation not only affects physical health but also mental health, participation in education, relationships with the majority population and access to employment. When young couples have to move away from their extended family due to a lack of adequate accommodation it results in a loss of intergenerational learning, and decreased mental health.

A recurring issue was the quality and appropriateness of the accommodation currently available. Submissions noted that families are often living in substandard accommodation which is unsafe, particularly for children, and without access to basic services like electricity and running water. The discrimination faced by both Travellers and Roma in accessing private rented accommodation was considered as a significant problem, with many landlords refusing to rent to Traveller or Roma

families. Faced with limited options, families are forced to rent and/or live in substandard, unsafe accommodation as there is no alternative available.

The lack of culturally appropriate accommodation was repeatedly referenced. Private rented accommodation is not appropriate for many Travellers families. There has been a serious rise in Traveller and Roma homelessness and overcrowding.

The 1998 Traveller Accommodation Act represents a planned, integrated and comprehensive response to the accommodation needs of Travellers. However the Act has been disregarded by many Local Authorities around the country. Local Authorities were perceived as incapable of providing appropriate Traveller accommodation in a timely manner. The absence of any monitoring and evaluation framework for the delivery of Traveller accommodation and a lack of accountability with regards to the budgets for Traveller accommodation were highlighted as ongoing issues.

The creation of an independent body to implement Traveller accommodation policy was advocated for to ensure greater transparency and the ring-fencing of Traveller accommodation budgets. This would also be with a view to making Local Authorities accountable for the non-expenditure of their Traveller accommodation budgets - to this end the introduction of financial sanctions has been suggested.

It was recommended that an annual meeting of all LTACC's take place to share experiences, to promote best practice and to identify and address barriers to the implementation of Traveller accommodation programmes. The establishment of a bench mark for national standards based on best practice and underpinned by local authorities' obligations under positive duty was suggested as a possible approach to addressing anomalies and inadequacies across local authorities.

The criteria for accessing social housing are perceived as having a disproportionate impact on Roma. Satisfying the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) on social welfare and housing applications disproportionately affects both migrant Roma and Irish Travellers. Roma and Travellers need support and advocates to access housing as it can be extremely difficult to access private rented accommodation. Discrimination prevents many families from accessing private rented accommodation or employment, both of which are considered under the criteria for social housing. In particular 52 weeks of PRSI requirement was perceived as an insurmountable obstacle for the most marginalised families forcing them into inappropriate and unofficial accommodation arrangements including abandoned houses etc.

Anomalies across the system with regards to eligibility for social housing were highlighted. In some areas Roma could register for local housing without fulfilling the specified criteria whilst in others this was impossible.

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 Act acknowledges the centrality of Traveller culture and identity in relation to Travellers accessing culturally appropriate

housing. Serviced transient sites are needed to recognise Traveller nomadism. To give Travellers legal protection for their nomadism the repeal of Section 24 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002, which makes trespass on land with an 'object' such as a caravan a criminal offence, has been called for.

Accessing credit for the purchase of caravans was considered impossible for many Travellers. Schemes to assist Travellers in the purchase of caravans at a local authority level were seen as inadequate, resulting in Travellers taking loans from unofficial money lenders and placing them in vulnerable positions. The provision of a 'micro credit' or 'micro lending' scheme for the purchase of caravans was suggested as a measure to support better financial inclusion and address this issue.

Key considerations:

- The provision of accessible and appropriate accommodation for Travellers and Roma.
- Examine and address the barriers faced by Roma in accessing social housing.
- The role of local authorities with regards to the provision of Traveller accommodation; particularly the absence of a monitoring and evaluation framework and accountability mechanisms.
- Ring fencing of the budget for Traveller accommodation and the introduction of a budget line for Roma accommodation.
- Review of the Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2002 and the creation of a network of transient sites.

Cultural Identity

This theme was widely supported. It was felt that Traveller and Roma culture should be supported and included in wider society. To this end, national cultural organisations should be encouraged to work with Travellers and Roma to develop programmes and resources which showcase and include Traveller and Roma culture at a local and national level across national cultural institutions.

From the perspective of Travellers, recognition as a minority ethnic group was seen as key to recognition of Traveller culture more widely in Irish society.

It was suggested that Traveller and Roma culture be included in national cultural events, for example the commemoration of the 1916 Rising. This was regarded as important not only from the perspective of Traveller and Roma communities but also in terms of educating wider Irish society about the contributions made by Traveller and Roma culture to Irish and European culture.

A number of submissions pointed to the importance of recognising and preserving Cant, Traveller stories and music. It was suggested that a Traveller cultural institution be established with responsibility for the preservation and archiving of these traditions and also to educate the wider population about Traveller culture.

Traveller Pride Week was named as a positive model which should continue to be supported. It was proposed that this model could be expanded or a similar event established to showcase Roma culture and achievements in Ireland.

The importance of horse ownership as part of Traveller culture was seen as a key opportunity to foster and encourage intergenerational learning. Programmes which support horse ownership programmes could be utilised not only to encourage positive identity and self-esteem for young Travellers but also to support and promote cultural continuity within the community.

Key considerations:

- Recognition of Travellers as a minority ethnic group is pivotal to recognising and respecting Travellers contribution to Irish culture.
- Traveller and Roma culture should be supported, celebrated and included in wider society at a local and national level.
- Traveller pride week should continue to be supported and promoted. A similar event should be resourced and developed to showcase the achievements of the Roma community and Roma culture in Ireland.
- Programmes around horse ownership should be used to encourage intergenerational learning and to support positive identity for Travellers.

Education

Submissions suggested a review of the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy in light of the cuts to Traveller specific education supports. Concerns were expressed with regards to which government department was responsible for the implementation of the strategy given that the Department of Education and Skills considers a number of the recommendations included in the strategy outside of their remit. The necessity of data collection and the absence of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the strategy were highlighted as ongoing issues.

It was noted that Travellers and Roma have experienced severe educational disadvantage in Ireland and across Europe. In order to break this cycle, sustained targeted interventions which support Traveller and Roma to participate in mainstream education settings are necessary. These interventions should be available from early childhood through to adult education.

Traveller and Roma parents need to be supported in accessing education and to support their children to participate in education. Given the low levels of educational attainment in both the Traveller and Roma communities supports like home work clubs and tutoring are vital to improving the educational attainment of both communities.

The question was raised as to whether Roma were to be included under the existing Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy or whether a new strategy for Roma and education should be developed.

Bullying and discrimination within the education system were considered problematic with submissions expressing concerns that discrimination within the system towards Traveller and Roma students is not handled with an appropriate level of gravitas or systematically recorded.

Submissions made a number of recommendations with regards to ensuring the inclusion of Traveller and Roma across the education system. It was recommended that cultural awareness and anti-racism training was compulsory at pre-service and in-service levels for teachers, early year's practitioners and third level staff. This was viewed as integral to improving the experiences of Traveller and Roma students. The inclusion of Traveller and Roma culture as part of the formal curriculum at both primary and post primary level is viewed as essential to ensuring Traveller and Roma students feel included and valued in education settings. Several submissions suggested the mainstreaming of the Yellow Flag programme.

Positive action measures to increase the number of Travellers and Roma working in the education system should be undertaken. Having members of the Roma and Traveller communities involved in the education system was considered to have a multitude of benefits including: providing positive role models for young Travellers and Roma, challenging prejudice and stereotypes in the education system and building trust between Traveller and Roma parents and the education system.

School costs remain prohibitively expensive particularly for the most marginalized families. Families that are unable to access social welfare supports due to the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) are sometimes placed in a position where they cannot afford to send their children to school. For families living in poverty it is not just the costs of uniforms and school books which can be prohibitive but also providing lunches for children. Systems need to be put in place which ensure that poverty does not act as a barrier to accessing education.

Accessing information about the education system and English language supports can be very challenging for members of the Roma community due to language barriers. Accessible information needs to be made available to ensure that families can access available supports and can engage with the education system in a meaningful manner. The significant diversity of education needs within the Roma community was reiterated and the necessity of providing a range of education supports at different levels including classes for adults who are illiterate or who may have little formal education.

One of the key concerns and recommendations across all of the submissions under this theme was the importance of establishing clear links and progression routes between education and employment for Travellers and Roma. Strategies should name Travellers and Roma as targets and take into account the specific

circumstances of Traveller and Roma with regards to education. Concern was expressed that the Further Education and Training strategy made no reference to Travellers or Roma.

Key considerations:

- Review the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy with a view to developing a monitoring and evaluation framework, an implementation plan and clarify the roles of government departments and statutory agencies with regards to its implementation.
- Inclusion of Traveller and Roma culture in formal curricula.
- Targeted interventions to challenge educational disadvantage and facilitate Traveller and Roma participation in mainstream education supports.
- Compulsory pre-service and in-service cultural awareness and anti-racism training for teachers, early year's practitioners and third level staff.
- Clear progression routes and pathways between education and employment.

Employment

The challenge faced by Travellers and Roma in accessing meaningful employment was highlighted across all of the submissions. Given the severity of the issue a number of submissions proposed the development of a specific national Traveller and Roma training and employment strategy. Further to this it was felt that the revised NTRIS strategy should pay particular attention to young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) particularly given that the Traveller population is young and at high risk of mental health problems and suicide.

Discrimination was viewed as a key barrier in accessing employment. It was considered particularly difficult for Traveller and Roma men to gain meaningful employment, many Roma men were engaged in low waged, temporary or seasonal work which was particularly unreliable and left families in very vulnerable positions. It was suggested that the state should undertake positive action programmes which seek to recruit, train and employ Travellers and Roma in the public services.

Self-employment and entrepreneurship were considered integral to both the Traveller and Roma communities and to be encouraged and facilitated through education and training programmes. Information on self –employment and associated taxes etc., was noted as being inaccessible particularly if you have limited literacy or do not speak English this acted as a prohibitive barrier for both Travellers and Roma. Similarly the inaccessibility of credit is an ongoing barrier to entrepreneurship. Many Travellers and Roma do not have accounts in financial institutions and would find it difficult to open these kinds of accounts due to the kind of documentation required. Access to a 'micro-lending or 'micro credit' scheme for Traveller and Roma would go some way to addressing this issue and facilitate greater financial inclusion.

High levels of unemployment are inextricably linked with low educational attainment. The point made under the education theme was reiterated with regards to the necessity of establishing clear links between education and employment, programmes and policies which link education to employment and vice versa were considered essential to improving the educational attainment and employment prospects of Traveller and Roma. Policies should be developed in a cohesive way i.e. policies for social inclusion should dovetail with initiatives to increase access to the labour market.

Horse ownership was seen as a key area which could form the basis for employment and entrepreneurship schemes. The significant interest and expertise in this area within the Traveller community should be encouraged and exploited to support education and training and increase employment opportunities. Submissions noted that a number of successful schemes were already in existence that could be further developed.

Key considerations:

- Development of a National Traveller and Roma training and employment strategy to support Traveller and Roma inclusion in the labour market.
- Positive action measures to recruit, train and employ Traveller and Roma in public services.
- Support for entrepreneurship and self-employment programmes to include a 'micro-lending or 'micro credit' scheme
- Clear pathways and links between employment and education
- Support for horse ownership/care programmes which incorporate job skills training and education.

Family and Children

Whilst this was regarded as an important area by all submissions there were fewer recommendations under this theme than others. The majority of recommendations related to the new Child and Family Agency (Tusla). Specifically, frontline staff working with families should be trained to support families and children in a culturally appropriate and sensitive way. All future policies and strategies developed by Tusla should be Traveller/Roma and equality proofed to ensure positive outcomes for children from both communities.

'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures' was noted as a good model but lacking in targeted actions to improve the lives of Traveller and Roma children. It was proposed that the revised NTRIS could include targeted activities that would correspond with the goals identified in 'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures'.

It was recommended that Children's Services Committees should include Traveller and Roma representatives and have anti-bias approaches imbedded in the implementation of their 3 year plans.

Key considerations:

- Cultural awareness and anti –racism training for all Tusla, staff particularly frontline staff.
- The Traveller/Roma and Equality proofing of all policy and strategies developed by Tusla.
- Targeted initiatives to support the inclusion of Traveller and Roma children which correspond to the goals identified in ‘Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures’.

Health

The recurring recommendation which emerged under this theme was the development of a specific plan or strategy to improve the health outcomes for Travellers informed by the results of the All Ireland Traveller Health Study.

Submissions reiterated the importance of a social determinants approach in addressing health inequalities within the Traveller and Roma communities.

The importance and benefits of Primary Health Care for Traveller Projects (PHCTP) was highlighted. Concerns were expressed at cuts to PHCTPs, the number of projects has dropped from 40 to 30 and a number of projects are under significant pressure due to funding cutbacks. The PHCTP model was suggested as a positive model which could be used to improve the health outcomes in the Roma community.

The need to develop culturally appropriate or culturally ‘safe’ services was raised as both Travellers and Roma continue to experience discrimination in health settings. Anti-racism and cultural awareness training was identified as being integral to improving the experience of Travellers and Roma in accessing health services. Similar to other themes the need for positive action measures to support, recruit and train Travellers and Roma to become health professionals and social workers was encouraged.

The impact of HRC on accessing healthcare was noted as being significant for the Roma community, particularly for pre and post-natal Roma women who cannot register for other health related services. The need to examine the impact of this policy on the Roma community was reiterated.

The decentralisation of responsibility for Traveller and Roma health to the HSE was perceived to have resulted in an accountability deficit. The NTHAC was considered an effective partnership structure particularly given its location within the Department of Health and one that should be reinstated. It was suggested that the Traveller Health budget be ring-fenced and the indicative Traveller health budget restored. Similarly there should be a distinct ring-fenced budget line for Roma.

All Drug Task Force Committees should have a permanent position for Traveller and Roma representatives, training should be available for these representatives to support their engagement on these committee. Travellers and Roma need to be named in national service and operational plans particularly in the areas of mental health/ suicide, counselling and alcohol/drug addiction.

The suicide rate in the Traveller community is of serious concern and requiring urgent action. Submissions called for a response which focused on suicide prevention using a social determinants approach and increasing the availability of crisis supports and counselling services which are culturally specific.

Key considerations:

- Development of a plan or strategy informed by the All Ireland Traveller Health Study and underpinned by a social determinants approach, to improve the health outcomes of Travellers and Roma.
- Support and resource the development of the PHCTP infrastructure and develop a comparable network of projects for the Roma community.
- Develop ‘culturally safe’ health services including but not limited to comprehensive cultural awareness and anti-racism training for health professionals and social workers.
- Review the impact of the Habitual Residence Condition on access to healthcare services.
- Reinstate the National Traveller Health Advisory Committee with an independent chair and ensure Traveller/Roma representation across the nine national directorates.
- Protection of the current budget and restoration of the indicative Traveller health budget. A specific Roma health budget should be allocated.
- Development and resourcing of specific targeted programmes to address mental health and suicide in the Traveller community.

Political Participation

Improving and supporting political participation was widely supported. Community development approaches and local Traveller organisations were viewed as having a key role in improving, supporting, and facilitating political participation. It was proposed that the revised strategy should support the development of a comparable infrastructure of Roma community development groups.

In order to encourage and support greater participation in local and national politics and processes, Traveller and Roma organisations should be resourced to develop political awareness and leadership workshops.

Local government was viewed as key area where political participation should be encouraged and facilitated given the role of local authorities in key areas which impact on Travellers and Roma lives including accommodation.

A number of submissions pointed to the need to increase the number of Roma representatives on the NTRIS steering group to ensure that Roma were fully included in the development and overview of the revised NTRIS.

It was proposed that given the size of the Traveller population a member of the Traveller community should be appointed to Seanad as a Taoiseach's nominee.

Concern was expressed that elected representatives have in the past and continue to make racist and anti-Traveller /Roma statements. It was proposed that political parties should develop anti-racist protocols in advance of elections. Party members found in violation of these protocols should be sanctioned.

Key considerations:

- Provide resources to Traveller organisations to facilitate and encourage greater political engagement and leadership in the Traveller community.
- Support the development of Roma organisations underpinned by a community development approach.
- Call on political parties to develop anti-racist protocols.

Proposed New Themes

Traveller/Roma Infrastructure / Civil Society/Community Development

This was the new theme that was proposed most frequently, with the majority of submissions supporting the introduction of this theme. A strong Traveller infrastructure was considered vital to the success of the proposed themes and the overall success of the revised NTRIS. Traveller infrastructure is considered necessary to ensuring that Travellers can develop the capacity to contribute to actions proposed in the strategy at both a local and national level. Since 2011, the number of local Traveller groups has fallen from 40 to 30 whilst remaining groups have had their capacity significantly curtailed by funding cuts.

It was noted that the Roma infrastructure in Ireland was underdeveloped and in order to ensure real and meaning participation the capacity of Roma communities should be supported and developed to ensure that they can be included in measures aimed at addressing inclusion.

A community development approach was considered paramount to supporting the inclusion of both communities. For real and positive change to occur communities should be empowered to support social change and to allow individuals become role models and leaders within their own communities

Suicide Prevention

Both Travellers and Roma are considered 'priority groups' for which there is evidence of vulnerability and increased risk of suicidal behaviour. Currently the rate of suicide in the Traveller community is 6 times higher than that of the majority population – 7 times higher for Traveller men. For these reasons suicide prevention was proposed as a priority theme for the revised NTRIS.

Youth/NEET

Given the high levels of young people from both the Traveller and Roma communities not in employment, education or training it was suggested that a specific theme on 'Youth' should be included to ensure that this group is targeted in the revised strategy.

Conflict

Conflict was proposed as a new theme due to the significant impact that it has on Travellers. Conflict impacts on Travellers in a number of ways through violence, destruction of property, stress, intimidation and mental health problems. It can have a significant impact on Traveller children in terms of school attendance, access to play areas and mental health.

It was proposed the revised NTRIS include a variety of responses to conflict including mediation, and community support with a view to developing sustainable long term strategies to address and prevent conflict.

Financial inclusion

Financial exclusion was noted as a significant barrier for the Traveller community maintaining a dependency on illegal money lenders. Many Travellers and Roma do not have bank accounts in financial institutions and would find it difficult to open such accounts due to a lack of required identification. The importance of access to finance and the establishment of a personal 'micro' credit scheme were seen as being essential to insuring long term financial inclusion and thereby contributing to wider Traveller and Roma inclusion.

Criminal Justice System

A number of submissions referenced the experience of Travellers and Roma when engaging with the criminal justice system, specifically how discrimination impacts on Travellers and Roma experience of the criminal justice system. Distrust of the Gardaí was seen as a significant problem which was considered to have worsened given recent incidents. Similarly there were concerns about disproportionate arrest, conviction rates and sentencing. Submissions also referenced the experience of Travellers in prison and the difficulties faced by Travellers post release with regards to resettlement and accommodation.

Poverty

This theme was suggested for a number of reasons firstly it was considered that the revised NTRIS should include a commitment to poverty proofing all of its policies and actions. Further to this it was noted that the inability to access social welfare payments and/or engage in the labour market impacts on inclusion and access to all of the other themes proposed.

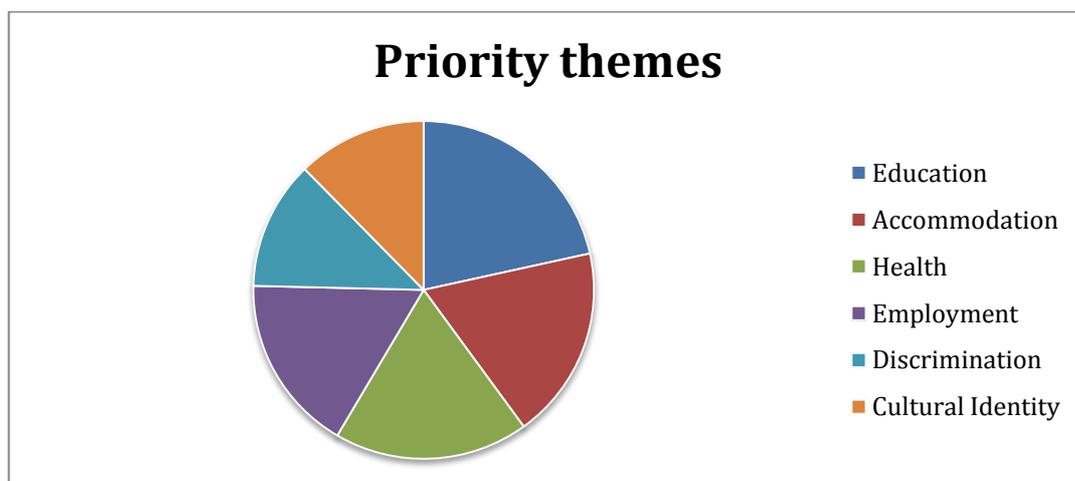
Social Welfare (HRC)

It was proposed that a social protection theme be introduced given the issues surrounding access to social protection including but not limited to, the impact of the Habitual Residency Condition (HRC). Inability to access social welfare supports was noted as creating significant barriers to accessing health, accommodation and education and perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage and poverty.

Priority Themes

There was widespread support for all of the themes proposed, seven submissions considered all of the themes equally important.

The six themes which were most commonly prioritized across submissions were: anti-discrimination, health, employment, cultural identity, education and accommodation. Education was the theme that was considered a priority theme most often but it is worth bearing in mind that there were more submissions from education stakeholders than on any other specific theme and therefore this may in part be considered to have skewed the results.



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Appendix A

Roma Interest Groups

Roma Integration and Support Unit Waterford (ISU)
Enniscorthy Roma Community Project (ERCP)
Waterford Roma Interagency Group (WRIG)
Tallaght Roma Integration Project (TRIPS)

Health Stakeholders

The National Office for Suicide Prevention
HSE National Social Inclusion Office for Traveller and Roma Health
HSE Social Inclusion Unit, Community Healthcare Organisation CHO Area 5
National Traveller Health Network (NTHN)
Traveller Health Unit, Meath
Traveller Health Unit, Cork/Kerry
Western Regional Traveller Health Network (WRTHN)

Stakeholders Representing Children

Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Tusla: Child and Family Agency

Education Stakeholders

Institute of Technology Tralee
Trinity College Dublin, Access Programmes (TAP)
Early Learning Initiative, National College of Ireland
Higher Education Authority

National Traveller Organisations

The Irish Traveller Movement
National Traveller Partnership
National Traveller Women's Forum
National Traveller MABS
Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
Involve

Local Traveller Groups

Donegal Travellers Project
St. Margaret's Travellers Community Association
Offaly Traveller Movement
Laois Traveller Action Group
Cork Travellers Women's Network
Clondalkin Travellers Development Group
Tallaght Travellers Community Development Project (TTCDP)
St. Anthony's Park Community Development Initiative Cork (SACDI)
Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance
Galway Rural Development

Justice and Policing Interest Groups

Care and Rehabilitation Directorate of the Irish Prison Service
Travellers in Prison Initiative (TPI)
Garda Racial Intercultural & Diversity Office

National Organisations

Citizens Information Board

The Irish Immigrant Support Centre, NASC