

The Dos and Don'ts of Working with Gypsies and Travellers and Examples of Good Policy and Practice

<p>DO recognise that GTs have usually experienced racist abuse, harassment, and violence in their lives.</p>	<p>DON'T allow for discriminatory/racist language or practices to go unchallenged.</p>
<p>DO ensure you treat GTs as INDIVIDUALS first and foremost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools – Respond to racist bullying promptly, celebrate GRT History Month and invite parents to be involved. • Police – recognise when GTs are VICTIMS (even if they have retaliated after being racially abused). • Probation – meet cultural needs in resettlement practices. • Prisons – offer access to GT forums and culturally appropriate books in the library and provide GT-specific training for staff. 	<p>DON'T make assumptions about GT INDIVIDUALS that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools – they won't want to learn. • Police – they can't be a victim of crime. • Probation – they will 'disappear' and won't attend/engage with their meetings. • Prisons – too many GTs on a wing will cause security issues.
<p>DO be knowledgeable and respectful of the GT cultures that might prioritise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single gender groups. • Not discussing issues of reproduction, sex, and sexualities in public settings, in mixed groups or mixed ages. • The presence of a family member for support. 	<p>When distributing marketing and communications regarding GT communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DON'T portray or exacerbate negative stereotypes. • DON'T misuse their imagery or appropriate their culture.
<p>DO remember that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those living in bricks and mortar housing are <i>still</i> ethnically/culturally GTs. • Travellers are still <i>real</i> even if they don't have Romany heritage. 	<p>DON'T exclude GTs from BME/Diversity discussions, activities and training.</p>
<p>DO understand that GTs have varying levels of literacy and are not all illiterate.</p>	<p>DON'T assume that individuals are illiterate.</p>
<p>DO look for GT organisations who can assist you to communicate effectively with GTs.</p>	<p>DON'T rely only on GT organisations.</p>
<p>DO increase outreach opportunities that engage communities including on sites and roadside and learn how individuals and communities want to be supported.</p>	<p>DON'T Expect everyone to trust you straight away as GTs may have had very poor experience of your service in the past. Building trust may take some time.</p>
<p>DO ensure an open dialogue to learn how individuals/communities want to be supported.</p>	<p>DON'T make decisions that impact GTs' without including them in the process.</p>
<p>DO disseminate information about services using visual aids/in-person events to ensure accessibility.</p>	<p>DON'T rely <i>only</i> on social media and online outputs (websites, email, blogs etc.) to communicate with the GT community.</p>

<p>DO get the communities involved and represented with forums and working groups.</p>	<p>DON'T assume that individuals from the community want to be <i>the</i> spokesperson for GT issues.</p>
<p>DO ensure that ethnicity recording is comprehensive and accurate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always capitalise 'Gypsy' & 'Traveller', to represent ethnic group status. • Be mindful to acknowledge all GT cultural groups. 	<p>DON'T question Romany Gypsy or Irish Travellers' status as ethnic groups or aggregate GRT communities and cultures.</p>
<p>DO understand the issues and challenges that GT communities face (e.g., inequalities in education, employment, health, and housing, and marginalisation, racism, and discrimination)</p>	<p>DON'T assume that everyone has experienced the same challenges or opportunities</p>
<p>DO be an advocate for the GT community – support GTs to ensure their voices are being heard.</p>	<p>DON'T speak on behalf of the GT community without their knowledge and/or involvement.</p>

<p>BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternity support – An effective partnership between a local GT Organisation, local midwives and women from local GT and Roma communities was born out of midwives identifying that those women were not engaging with the traditional model of midwifery care. Funding was provided to allow midwives to attend weekly women's groups held at the GT organisation in order to form relationships and build trust within the GT and Roma communities. As a result of these meetings, where the women were listened to and included in every stage of the process (including the naming of the group and the designing of the logo), a group was created to provide on-site, culturally sensitive maternal care. The GT and Roma women reported feeling safe and respected throughout the process and as a result community engagement increased and maternal outcomes improved. • Negotiated Stopping – The variation in policy, provisions and treatment in different local authorities can present real challenges for nomadic communities moving across their boundaries. After being verbally harassed and threatened by police in one county, a GT family pulled into a car park in another county expecting similar treatment. However, this time the police spoke to the family, assessed their needs, and approved a 5-day tolerated stopping time for that site. They also showed the families where the leisure centre was for washing and provided school packs for the children. • Trading Standards preventative action – A Trading Standards manager identified that specific recurring 'unfair trading' crimes within the GT communities were avoidable if they gained the correct paperwork and certifications. This manager and his team developed some targeted training courses with the aim of educating the community and preventing further engagement with the criminal justice system. They visited the local GT sites, spoke to members of the community, put up posters and arranged dates for group training sessions. • Refurbishing council sites – A site manager refurbished their council-owned GT sites by consulting with the GT residents and providing a choice of what they could have facility-wise (within a budget). There was a set price allocated per plot and GTs were offered the option to have the standard kitchen or to go and view and choose their own kitchen and pay the difference. This allowed GTs to be included in decisions and developments that impact them and their living conditions. 	
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