Inclusive Educational Approaches for Scotland’s Travelling Communities within the context of interrupted learning

Guidance for local authorities, schools and support services
Acknowledgements

This revised National Guidance is designed to facilitate good practice and enable children and young people with interrupted learning to enjoy and benefit from the opportunities afforded by Curriculum for Excellence. Its focus on Traveller families living in and visiting Scotland has been made possible by the generous and thoughtful contributions of Traveller Education Network colleagues. Other colleagues, from schools, Learning and Teaching Scotland, the HMI and the Scottish Government, have encouraged and supported the Scottish Traveller Education Programme in gathering this valuable information and advice for educators, and colleagues from other disciplines.

In extending thanks to colleagues, and the Travellers whose voices underpin this work, it is hoped that this National Guidance better supports policy makers, educators and families in ensuring children’s and young people’s engagement in a relevant and appropriate education to equip them as effective citizens in the 21st century.

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Summary of key issues

Scotland’s children, young people and their families ‘need the support of our education system to help them to learn and achieve their potential’. The diversity of life chances and lifestyles of families living in Scotland today poses a challenge to education’s delivery of educational and social support to ensure inclusion for all. This guidance has been prepared for staff in local education authorities, schools and support services. It is also of use for other agencies, for example health and social services that may work with educators in supporting Scotland’s Traveller communities.

This guidance raises three key questions:
• What is meant by interrupted learning?
• Why is there a continued need for action?
• What is working well and how can practice be further improved?

The first question provides a focus on meeting the needs of children and young people from Traveller families within the broader context of the difficulties encountered by many learners who experience interruptions to their school education, such as children unable to attend school due to ill health, children in care, children excluded from school etc, for whom separate guidance has been provided by the Scottish Government.

The second question covers a range of evolving factors that create barriers to school learning and contribute to the different challenges faced by Traveller families. Much work has been done; however, due to the complexity of families’ lives and a subsequent mismatch between what is generally available, educators must continue to work reflectively in order to address the impact of interruptions on learning and teaching.

The third question addresses the main areas for action based on good practice identified in the field, which helps to highlight inequalities of opportunity that need to be changed. A key to delivery of equality of opportunity lies in a combined need for more flexible approaches in delivering services while working in partnership with individual families and other agencies – wherever a family stays and for whatever length of time they may stay within an area.

The final section summarises the key recommendations made within this guidance.

This guidance is informed by Scottish and other relevant research, accessible through the Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP) website (www.scottishtravellered.net).

1 Throughout this document, the terms ‘support staff’ and ‘support services’ should be taken to include designated support staff, support for learning teachers, policy development officers supporting schools and staff from other backgrounds, for example community education.
Terminology

It is important that all staff in local authorities, particularly staff in schools and support services, are aware that Scotland’s Travelling people are not one homogeneous group. Within Scotland there are four distinctive and separate groupings, each with their own histories, cultural traditions and values. They are:

**Gypsies/Travellers** – a self-identifying people that comprises Scotland’s oldest ethnic minority community, often nomadic in lifestyle. Use of both terms recognises that some families prefer to call themselves Scottish Gypsy Travellers, while others prefer to call themselves Scottish Travellers. Legal recognition of Gypsies/Travellers as Scotland’s indigenous ethnic minority was highlighted in a recent employment tribunal (Judge Hosie, October 2008). The Scottish Government recognises Scottish Gypsies/Travellers’ distinctive cultural identities and lifestyles. It works to ensure that families have access to and continuity in education. It supports local authorities in meeting their duties to deliver appropriate and relevant services, while ensuring that families are not discriminated against.

**Occupational Travellers** – officially referred to as Occupational Travellers, Scotland’s Showmen or travelling show and fairground families self-define as business communities, albeit with a strong and distinctive culture well known and enjoyed through the ‘shows’ that regularly travel across Scottish towns and cities. This community does not have and does not claim minority ethnic status, and is distinguished from Gypsies/Travellers. Occupational Travellers include circus and bargee families (circus groups are most likely to be visitors, while bargee families live on the UK’s canal systems).

**New Travellers** – formed during the 20th century around political and philosophical issues, for example ecological issues, these communities are comprised of people whose diverse lifestyles frequently contrast with mainstream ways of organising everyday life. Families may borrow from traditional travelling cultures, for example living in tents or trailers, but do not claim ethnic minority status. Little is known about these communities in Scotland.

**Roma** – since the expansion of the European Community, Roma minorities have come to Scotland and many live in Govanhill, Glasgow. Roma are also not a homogeneous group. Collectively called Roma, groups of Romani people live in the different countries that make up Europe. Each Roma group has a different way of speaking Romanes, but as some words are similar, Romani people may be able to understand one another. European Roma have ethnic minority status and are protected under the Race Relations Act 1976.

Roma families have mostly come to Scotland from the new EU member states (either from the Accession 8 (A8) countries – Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia, or from the Accession 2 (A2) countries – Romania and Bulgaria). Each Roma population has its own history and cultural identity and may have a distinctive language. Importantly, families will identify themselves first in national terms and then as Roma, for example Slovak Roma or Romanian Roma.

Other Traveller groups from the rest of UK, for example, English Gypsies, Welsh Gypsies, Romanichals, Irish Travellers or Showmen, may visit Scotland.

Because of the complex cultural and possibly linguistic differences between these communities, educators (along with other policy and professional and public service providers) must be sensitive to how such differences shape a family’s willingness and capacity to use public services designed to meet the needs of settled communities.

In this guidance, for ease of reading when referring to all of the groups at once, the generic term ‘Scotland’s Travelling communities’ is used. This does not deny any group’s rights to be acknowledged as a separate community with its own distinctive identities, cultures, histories and lifestyles. In referring to non-Traveller populations, this guidance adopts an accepted terminology – ‘non-Traveller communities’. It shows respect to capitalise the first letters of ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Traveller’ in all written communications.

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2 The Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain, Scottish Section, prefer to be called ‘Showmen’ and do not wish to be referred to as occupational travellers or Showtravellers.
Section 1: The context

Section 1 provides information on the context within which this guidance is published.

This guidance is reviewed within the context of an inclusive society where we strive to improve ‘the life chances for children, young people and families at risk’. In addition, local authorities, schools and support services are reminded of the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework, which outlines five strategic objectives for a ‘wealthier and fairer; smarter; healthier; safer and stronger; and a greener’ society, which shape local authorities’ planning for delivery of public services. Central to this framework is Curriculum for Excellence, Scotland’s educational vision for all its children and young people. Curriculum for Excellence envisages that education will enable all children and young people to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

The Scottish Government’s policy approaches to delivering education are underpinned by the:

• Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act 2000
• Education (Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004
• Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009.

These key Acts feed into key policies and initiatives, for example:

• For Scotland’s Children: Better integrated children’s services
• Children Missing from Education (Scotland
• Getting it right for every child
• More Choices, More Chances.

The Scottish Government’s Included, engaged and involved – part 1: attendance in Scottish schools (2007) provides guidance on the management of attendance and absence in Scottish schools. It specifically refers to Gypsy and Traveller children and young people. Guidance to parents and local authorities on home education distinguishes between ‘home education’ as delivered by parents and ‘education outwith school’ as delivered by education authorities. The Scottish Government encourages the development of an enterprising ethos and recognises its relevance for Traveller children and young people. The More Choices, More Chances initiative signals the success of partnership working, for example between Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) colleagues and a wide range of partners, in producing a range of courses and qualifications that widen opportunities for accreditation of young people’s learning.

The Scottish Government’s recognition of the specific needs of Scotland’s Travelling children and young people is reflected in its annual funding of STEP. In consultation with relevant colleagues within Scottish education, STEP’s preparation of this guidance reflects its remit to support developments in inclusive educational approaches for Scotland’s Travelling communities. This guidance aims to support education authorities, schools and support services in delivering education for Traveller children and young people.
A series of HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) publications, ‘Count us In’, aims to encourage a more inclusive focus in schools. Of particular note in a changing demographic, Count us In: A sense of belonging looks at the needs of children and young people newly arrived in Scotland. Outlined in its publication Improving Scottish Education 2005–2008, HMIE’s stated focus is Scotland’s need for an education system through which the population as a whole can develop the kind of knowledge, skills and attributes that can help it thrive personally, socially and economically in the 21st century.

‘Whilst there are real strengths in achievement for children and young people in Scotland, we still need to ensure that education is sufficiently inclusive. Substantial numbers of children and young people from vulnerable groups and from disadvantaged circumstances do not sufficiently develop their skills, attain or achieve qualifications.’ (Improving Scottish Education 2005–2008)

Improving the poor outcomes of some learners remains a central challenge for all establishments and services which support children, young people and their families, and adult learners, particularly those facing significant disadvantage. While reinforcing high expectations, Improving Scottish Education 2005–2008 prioritises:

- identifying and tackling barriers to learning before they become entrenched
- finding new ways to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population of learners
- including newcomers to Scotland for whom English is an additional language personalising learning and support to take account of individual needs, choices and circumstances.

HMIE’s publication Taking a closer look at: Inclusion and Equality – meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers (2005) still provides schools with a series of relevant questions to self-evaluate their inclusion of Travelling families, and their delivery of quality provision to help Travelling children and young people achieve a sense of belonging.
A Traveller child’s entitlement to education

Under Section 2 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act, a clear duty is placed on education authorities and schools to have regard for a child’s right to a ‘school education’.

It shall be the right of every child of school age to be provided with school education by, or by virtue of arrangements made, or entered into, by, an education authority (2002).

Additional Support for Learning legislation also signals that educators must seek out the views of a child or young person and bring those views into decision-making processes. While a Traveller pupil’s access to education is a right, educators must take into consideration the rights of Travelling families to maintain their cultures, for example travelling show and fairground families travel for business reasons.

A Traveller child or young person’s entitlement to a ‘school education’ is not affected by their family’s mobility. Many teachers may think that when Travellers live a settled life, whether in a house or a trailer on a site or a yard, they lose their Traveller identity. Such attitudes reflect widespread professional misunderstandings about the cultural role of travelling in Traveller identities. Gypsy/Traveller families, for example, frequently report their perceptions that some schools have little sympathy and offer poor support for Gypsy/Traveller families, their values and lifestyles.

Issues of privacy, individual rights and legal responsibilities may arise within a family. In a close-knit Gypsy/Traveller community it can be especially difficult for a young person who wishes to participate in educational activities, as this choice may challenge cultural norms and bring a young Traveller into direct conflict with their peers and family. Schools may need to act in an advocacy role for a child while upholding the integrity of their family. Professionals’ judgements or lack of confidence in relation to these issues can lead to inaction that results in a child’s loss of their right to education.

All children learn first and foremost within their home setting, through interaction with their main carers, extended family and other members of their community. All parents hope that their children’s experience of education will be a happy one. Families’ aspirations vary, often in response to their own experiences in educational settings. Traveller parents, like any parents with no experience of formal schooling or less than happy memories of their own schooldays, may find it difficult to engage as active partners with schools and education authorities.
How best to engage with parents and carers in educating their children and young people

All children must be educated and it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that a child receives an education. Traveller children, like any other children, must receive an education: this may involve going to school. Education authorities have a responsibility to assist parents and do so largely by providing education in schools. An education authority’s interpretation of any legal requirements for children is the area that allows for some flexibility in relation to mobile children or children not attending for other reasons. Good practice also takes into account the learning needs of all children in a family, which adds complexity to decision making.

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006: Guidance (www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/148166/0039411.pdf) provides an overview of the Scottish Government’s recognition of ‘the vital role that parents and other carers play in children’s learning and development. Parents are the first and ongoing educators of their own children and, as such, require the information and support to help develop their child’s learning at home and in the community’.

The guidance aims to support education authorities in meeting their duties under the Act, which means that issues of equality and the requirements of equalities legislation must be taken into account, that their strategies for parental involvement must promote equal opportunities and ensure that children and young people do not experience discrimination. It recognises that for a variety of reasons some parents have little or limited contact with the school, or have difficulties in supporting their child’s education and learning. For example, some parents’ own experience of school education was negative, which may undermine their confidence in engaging with the school. ‘Education authorities and schools need to ensure that their home–school communication arrangements are appropriate for all parents, including mobile families, absent parents and those whose first language is not English, and those who have difficulties with written communication.’

Schools’ engagement with parents must take account of learning at home, support such learning through an effective home-school partnership and ensure that all parents have the opportunity to express their views. Parents’ views must be taken into account on matters affecting the education of their children, the school’s arrangements for promoting parental involvement and other matters or issues of interest to parents. In organising a Parent Forum at a school, parents’ views must be represented to the school, education authority and others, through a representative Parent Council for the school.

The Scottish Government is keen to ensure that parents and carers understand the changes involved in Curriculum for Excellence and its aims for children and young people. For example, it has set up a user-friendly website, Parentzone (www.LTScotland.org.uk/parentzone/index.asp), to enable parents to access information about policies and strategies concerning children and young people in Scotland.

Increasingly, more Traveller families have access to the internet, and a school’s home-school link staff could encourage a Traveller family to access this information to help them gain confidence and a greater understanding of how Scottish education is organised. Since publication of the earlier guidance some education authorities and schools have developed more effective ways to support their relationships with Traveller parents as a way of encouraging their engagement with schools and learning.
One local authority developed services for Gypsy/Traveller families by providing an on-site portacabin. It provided a common but safe space for different agencies to work directly with families. Its education authority’s appointment of designated support staff has enhanced Gypsy/Traveller children and young people’s access to education as support staff and parents are able to get to know each other in the portacabin. In another education authority Gypsy/Traveller parents were encouraged to identify and attend courses at a local further education college. Parents and some young people worked together in planning a cookery course. They delivered information regarding the dates and times of the course and some examples of recipes. The parents were enthusiastic about learning together and worked well as a team while learning new cooking skills and recipes. The French chef’s teaching style was particularly appreciated as he took account of their literacy needs by initially measuring out ingredients and demonstrating how to cook the food. Parents, pleased with their learning experiences, identified further course topics based around hair and beauty and developing sewing skills.

For some families, especially mobile families, engaging with schools is a challenging process, which is sometimes due to cultural differences between the school and the home. While many minority ethnic and cultural groups, such as Gypsies/Travellers, participate positively in school life, families are frequently concerned that a school’s culture may impact negatively on their family’s cultural values.

Educators and families have welcomed the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Acts 2004 and 2009. This legislation emphasises the importance of giving a voice to children and young people, and their parents or carers, in identifying individuals’ learning needs. The breadth of the concept ‘additional support needs’ draws attention to the distinctive and often complex requirements of many learners – whether for short-term or long-term reasons, and whether due to learning environment, family circumstances, disability or health needs or social and emotional factors. It is important that educators don’t assume that a Traveller child has additional support needs; educators should base any judgements about children and young people’s additional support needs on sound assessment procedures.
What is interrupted learning?

Within this guidance the term ‘interrupted learning’ refers to significant interruptions to continuity, coherence and progress in school-based formal learning. Traveller families teach their children and young people knowledge and skills, which they bring with them to school. The challenge to educators is to recognise, acknowledge and build on this prior learning.

Travelling families’ mobility is generally linked to interrupted learning. Different Traveller communities have different patterns and levels of mobility. For example, Showmen’s travel patterns are more predictable than Gypsy/Traveller families’ travel patterns. While some families travel regularly, others travel according to their changing needs and circumstances, for example during periods of illness, for family events, while children engage with schools, and when following employment opportunities.

Showmen’s patterns of mobility are generally predictable but can vary because of health or family events. However, changes in the current economic climate are evident in families’ changing travelling patterns as they adapt to their business needs. The travelling season traditionally covered March to October. The seasonality of work is extending this period so that some travel is now required in the winter months, for example for Bonfire Night and Christmas and New Year events.

Research has shown that Showmen’s children engage enthusiastically with school education and most enrol at a winter base school. While travelling with their family they may make use of other primary schools as they stop in towns along the way. On transition to secondary schools this pattern of school use is less successful. In addition, most young Show people are learning on-the-job skills with their families. These informal learning opportunities are a necessary part of an education that equips them to be successful entrepreneurs and full members of the Showmen’s business community. As a result, the relevance of a school education increasingly diminishes. Nevertheless, more and more Showmen and their families recognise the need for formal learning in a rapidly changing world.

Showmen’s views on home and school learning

If they get on with their studies they’ll lose out in this business. They need this grounding [practical experience] if they’re to be able to keep it going.

(Education Liaison Officer, Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain, Glasgow Section)

You can’t be a good Showman without it – school education.

(Secondary-aged Showman)

Gypsies/Travellers continue centuries old traditions of travel related to work opportunities, family and cultural events. Many Gypsy/Traveller families live in houses for all or part of the year; some live on sites (local authority and private sites) and some may use roadside encampments. Families’ choices about where they live inevitably have implications for the degree of interruptions to a child’s learning and access to an effective school-based education.

There is a link between the availability of suitable stopping places and levels of uptake of school places. Gypsies/Travellers thus have varying patterns of attendance and views on the education services provided. Some may attend a school only once, while others may enrol for a period each year, or even make several visits.
to the same school within one session. Some participate fully in school-based education and are able to take up a broader range of paid employment.

New Travellers are highly individual in their choices regarding accommodation and patterns of mobility. At present no research has been conducted into families’ patterns of enrolment and attendance in Scottish schools. Anecdotal evidence suggests they experience similar issues to those faced by other mobile Traveller families.

Roma children and young people’s continuity of learning will have been interrupted as a result of their move to Scotland. Further interruptions to learning may ensue as families relocate in response to employment opportunities.

Children and young people from other backgrounds are also recognised as experiencing interruptions to their learning. A child or young person’s capacity or willingness to fully engage in education may lead to disengagement from education. For a variety of reasons, and in a diverse range of circumstances, some families are not able, or do not wish, to ensure their child’s regular attendance at school. Families’ decisions about absence during term times may also impact on a child’s continuity of learning.

Education authorities, schools and support services are tasked with developing inclusive practices for all Scotland’s children. Research shows that some schools are working well with children and young people from the above backgrounds. It also suggests that staff need a more consistent and flexible approach to curriculum planning and delivery. School staff are reported to show different attitudes towards children and young people from these backgrounds: while many are accorded full support, others are treated less sympathetically.
Why is there a continued need for action?

With the widening of the European Community, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has considered the UK’s educational provision for a range of minority and ethnic groups. The Council of Europe notes a continuing need for the UK to combat discrimination, particularly in relation to the role of the media in its biased, stereotyped and inaccurate reportage relating to these groups, including Gypsies/Travellers, and to protect and promote minorities’ cultures.

Official materials highlight the marginalisation of Travellers and Roma from state education provision throughout Europe and describe them as having the highest levels of illiteracy and lack of formal qualifications. The European Commission requires regular reports on the progress being made within each state to redress such inequalities. Supported by a range of legislative change and policy initiatives, particularly the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Acts (2004 and 2009) and an associated Code of Practice, Scotland aims to include all children, by providing an education that meets their individual learning needs.

The Scottish Government’s specific response to the concluding observations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Do the right thing (2008), states:

‘Children’s rights are relevant to everyone whose work impacts on children - in ensuring that children are able to fully enjoy their right to play, their right to be healthy and happy, to learn new things and be looked after and nurtured whether they live at home or not. All of these are rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The Scottish Government considers that these aims can be achieved through positive intercultural dialogue and tolerance. The UN’s education agency calls on the international community to endorse the approach of inclusive schools by implementing practical and strategic changes. These endorsements are reflected in the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act (2000), which aimed to raise educational standards for all pupils, by establishing the right of all children to receive a ‘school education’, which may involve attending a school.
Equality for Travelling children and young people

Much work has been done in Scottish schools to develop children and young people’s understandings of citizenship in order to help them embrace diversity. Such work needs to be built on in order to counter the negativity of media reports that provide the public with its main source information about Scotland’s Travelling families. Reports mainly focus on local incidents of a confrontational nature. At the other extreme, a tendency to treat Traveller people as ‘victims’ ignores the very real strengths to be found within their communities.

Reports commenting specifically on Scotland’s Travelling people mainly focus on Gypsies/Travellers. Reports by the following organisations outline the development of education for Traveller children and young people:

- the Secretary of State for Scotland’s Advisory Committee on Scotland’s Travelling People (1972–2000)
- Save the Children (1996–2006)

All note the unsatisfactory levels of educational and other public service provision for Gypsies/Travellers and the problems families faced in accessing education services, especially mobile families. In comparison, relatively little focus is given to the learning needs of children and young people from other Travelling communities (STEP 1990–2002). More recently, meeting the needs of Roma children and young people has added to the complexities faced by educators. Education authorities need to ensure that schools have access to a balanced range of information from a range of sources. The STEP website is a place to start, as it provides information, advice and support materials for Scottish educators, for example:

- ‘My Learning Record’ (MLR), a pupil’s hand-held initial curricular transfer record
- ‘Initial Rapid Assessment Guide for Gypsies and Travellers – within the context of interrupted learning’ (IRAG), a document to support teachers in their initial working with Travellers and other learners who arrive unexpectedly at school
- ‘Keeping in Touch’ parental leaflets designed to encourage families to keep in touch with education as they travel.

Another source of dedicated information, advice and support materials can be found on the National Association of Teachers of Travellers + Other Professionals (NATT +) website, which reflects English and Welsh educational policies and practices. These websites provide a good overview of the diverse approaches to supporting Traveller families across the United Kingdom.

Through a range of initiatives focusing on ‘getting it right for every child’, education authorities, schools and support services are beginning to address the diverse needs within schools. However, more needs to be done to ensure all children and young people are realising their full potential through the flexibility afforded by Curriculum for Excellence and More Choices, More Chances.
Stereotyping, racism and bullying

Oral traditions continue among Travellers. Identity is shaped by historical treatment. Families consider the Holocaust as a live issue. The Holocaust Memorial Day reminds everyone of the impact of negative stereotyping and attitudes that fail to recognise the particular educational needs of Gypsies/Travellers, Occupational Travellers and Roma. The Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) placed a general duty on public authorities to have ‘due regard’ for the need to eliminate racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups.

Gypsies and Travellers continue to report bullying and racism in schools as common occurrences. Taunting and name-calling on the journey to school by bus and in the playground from peers is reported as prevalent. Gypsies and Travellers also report some instances of discriminatory treatment from staff and non-Traveller parents. Such incidents can be the catalyst for withdrawing a family from school.

Some Gypsy/Traveller families report racial discrimination, bullying and physical harm to children at school; many then report that situations are generally not adequately dealt with. As a consequence younger members of a family have little confidence in being safe in school settings. Gypsy/Traveller families are understood to under-report racist treatment in schools, due to lack of knowledge of the formal channels and in having little expectation of support; families’ preferred method of dealing with any conflict is to ‘move on’. Showmen’s families on the other hand usually encourage their children to ‘stick it out’, and rarely make formal complaints. New Travellers vary in their responses, but some have alerted education authorities, schools and support services to their situations.

Research has shown that more education authorities have appointed designated staff to ensure Travelling children’s and young people’s needs are addressed. Designated staff report that they are encouraged by interest among some school colleagues wishing to gain a better understanding of Travellers’ cultural backgrounds. As part of that agenda, staff view bullying of any kind as unacceptable and make attempts to quickly address bullying whenever it arises.

Staff in education authorities and schools must continue to work with Traveller families in identifying and dealing effectively with any incidents of bullying. Many do so by:

- taking children and young people’s concerns seriously
- using relevant national and school policies, for example Being Safe in School in Scotland
- making contact with Scotland’s Anti-bullying Service, Respectme, for advice and support on addressing incidents of bullying
- challenging racism within the classroom through resources such as ‘Out of Site’, an education resource designed by Show Racism (or Bigotry) the Red Card
- encouraging all parents and the wider community to participate in positive approaches to inclusion and diversity.
For Travellers there is a constant tension between maintaining their lifestyles and cultures and engaging in formal education. Above all, they value financial independence and self-employment, which is based on their ability to operate successfully as a family unit. Increased competition from other skilled tradespeople and the entertainment industry for self-employed niche markets has reduced the range of opportunities to achieve these aims.

Gypsy/Traveller families are increasingly using primary schools to support their children’s formal learning. Although there are assurances of support from education authority staff and specific targeted resources to improve the quality of provision, evidence, in Scotland and throughout Europe, indicates that the vast majority of Gypsy/Traveller families, whether mobile or settled, decide not to transfer to secondary school. The reasons are complex but, generally, secondary schools are seen as threatening to their cultural values and ethnic boundaries. In particular, peer friendships and youth cultures, which involve contact with the opposite sex and exposure to drugs, are feared. In addition, transition to secondary school coincides with young people’s transition to adulthood roles within their communities.

New Travellers express a range of views, with some making use of formal education. These families face the same problems associated with mobility as other Traveller families. Families tend to take responsibility for their children and young people’s education. However, some look to education authorities for help in accessing resources and for guidance relating to the curriculum.

Roma families are not mobile in the Traveller sense. Families settled initially in areas of Glasgow, but are known to be gradually moving to take up employment opportunities in different parts of Scotland. Research with Roma families living in other parts of Scotland has not been carried out. Schools report that families have particularly enjoyed the welcome that their children received in Glasgow schools. Designated teachers in other authorities report Roma families’ engagement with schools, their need for information, advice and support, for example about how schools work, how they can best support their children and young people in education, and in relation to other public services. Roma children and young people generally come within the remit of teachers delivering English as an additional language services, and issues of literacy will also generally apply to their families.

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SECTION 2: What is working well and how can practice be further improved?

To help address these questions this section is divided into three sub-sections – how practice is being further improved; how generic policies and initiatives support schools and Travelling families; and how to include children and young people with interrupted learning.

Local authorities’ sensitivity to the complexity of the issues facing Scotland’s Travelling families when engaging public services helps to ensure more effective working with Travelling families. Local authorities are encouraged to provide leadership in seeking ways to engage directly with Travelling families in order to address families’ concerns regarding access to appropriate public services.

Developing inclusive practice to support Travelling children and young people and others with interrupted learning has a history. Local authorities would benefit from consulting seminal Scottish policy documents referred to above, which identify the complexities of everyday life for Travelling families, and noting key policy responses, for example Delivering for Scotland’s Gypsies/Travellers (2004) and its 37 recommendations for good practice. The Scottish Government’s subsequent policies and support for developments are accessible through its official website.

Several Scottish local authorities have instituted a Gypsy/Traveller inter-agency liaison group. Its function is to facilitate discussions between local Gypsy/Traveller families, elected officers, voluntary organisations and other relevant public services: generally accommodation, health, education, social work and police. This approach helps prevent counterproductive actions being taken, such as families being involuntarily moved on while schools are engaging positively with them. Establishing a formal forum for dialogue has been instrumental in defusing potential areas of conflict and in developing policy and practices that help to eliminate discrimination.
Education authorities’ educational inclusion of Traveller families, particularly mobile families and others with interrupted learning, depends on educators’ interpretation of legislation, policy and guidance. Research has shown that by establishing a named person at management level a number of education authorities have improved the educational inclusion of Travelling children and young people who are ‘settled’ or mobile, and not attending school. Senior staff help to raise colleagues’ awareness of a continued need to promote and support Travelling families’ access to formal education.

Contacting a knowledgeable person

Education authorities can mediate by:

- identifying a designated senior management officer with responsibility for supporting Travelling families, for example to take seriously any complaints related to bullying or racial incidents
- publishing policies and strategies for supporting Travelling children and young people, for example to ensure appropriate travel arrangements to and from school
- publishing impact assessments of policies and strategies reviewing enrolment, attendance and attainment levels for Travelling children and young people
- celebrating and sharing teachers’ good practice with Travelling children and young people with colleagues and other professionals working with children and young people (from other backgrounds) experiencing interrupted learning.

An education authority must offer to fulfil its duty to provide education and may offer additional support by way of admission to a school. Schools may find it difficult to maintain contact with individual children not attending school, particularly when families are non-literate or when they move across local authority boundaries. Some education authorities also provide education/additional support services delivered by designated support staff who work with schools or with families in out-of-school settings. The direct and regular involvement of these staff with families in their homes is a key factor in building trust and in helping Traveller families understand schools and education in a changing world.

The effectiveness of education authorities’ designated support staff in working with schools and families is reflected in Travellers’ increased enrolment in schools. More consistent attendance levels are being reported by primary schools, although secondary education continues to be a source of anxiety for Gypsy/Traveller families seeking to maintain their cultural backgrounds. Many of these families want a relevant education that allows their young people to compete in a changing world, but not through secondary schools, even when these families are settled and their young people recognise their local community.

Generic policies addressing racism, discrimination and the entitlements of a child experiencing interrupted learning apply to all Scotland’s children. Education authorities, schools and support services do not need to develop specific policies relating to Travelling families per se. Education authorities’ encouragement and support for schools in developing inclusive strategies will enable the inclusion of any pupil with irregular patterns of attendance. Education authorities are encouraged to produce specific guidance, monitor procedures and ensure that these strategies are effective, at authority, school and support service levels.
Schools – overcoming barriers to inclusion in school education

Schools and support services can face very real challenges in providing flexible solutions for their inclusion within a relatively rigid structure. Curriculum for Excellence offers a more flexible approach to learning that may work better in meeting the needs of Gypsy/Traveller children and young people. In addition, personal support is an entitlement within Curriculum for Excellence for all. Nevertheless, the following key issues impact on a Traveller child’s inclusion in education.

Enrolment and attendance – schools can mediate by:
- providing an identified school/family person
- clearly applying transport entitlement policies
- sensitively applying policies for school uniform, equipment and other support entitlements
- encouraging families to keep in touch when travelling to help maintain school placement

Family literacy – schools can mediate by:
- sensitively supporting parents in their completion of enrolment forms
- communicating appropriately (by telephone/ mobile) when a written home-school communication is required, for example school handbook and letters
- being aware of a family's ability to support children's learning, for example homework.

Timing - schools can mediate by:
- being aware of the differences between a school's and a Traveller family's timetable. Traveller families need to follow employment opportunities that impact on their capacity to:
  - keep appointments
  - attend extra-curricular activities
  - make subject choices
- informing Traveller families about a school’s learning, teaching and assessment procedures and the need for:
  - continuous assessment procedures
  - building learning portfolios
  - complying with externally set examination dates.

establishing support for families wishing to address bullying incidents, particularly if their child is being bullied or racially abused.
Traveller Education Network (TENET) support for schools and families

Many Scottish education authorities encourage their designated (dedicated) Traveller education support staff to join TENET, a Scotland-wide professional network supported by STEP that enables designated support staff working with Scotland’s Travelling families in schools or in out-of-school settings to:

- meet quarterly
- share and develop good practice
- keep in touch with children’s progress as they travel with their families
- contribute to the development of Traveller education resources.

Education authorities are encouraged to fully use the knowledge and experience of support staff working with Gypsy/Traveller and other Travelling children, young people and their families, and to provide appropriate training to support staff in carrying out their multiple roles, often with a peripatetic remit.

Through their knowledge and experience of Travelling cultures, designated staff can offer information and support to families and schools in ways that recognise Travellers’ family values while supporting the rights of Travelling children and young people to education.

Contact details are regularly updated by and posted on the STEP website (www.scottishtravellereducation.net).

Accessing the curriculum – schools can mediate by:

- recognising prior family-based learning
- promoting the IRAG to quickly place a child in appropriate learning groups
- developing and planning support for learning by building on prior learning and establishing any additional support needs
- providing distance and ICT-supported learning in out-of-school settings
- avoiding over-assessment by providing a mobile child with a ‘My Learning Record’ (MLR) sharing/providing information on Curriculum for Excellence in an appropriate format/manner
- providing advice on supporting learning at home
- providing regular updates (verbal and written) on children and young people’s progress, attainment and achievement.

This guidance recognises the range of ‘personalised learning plans’ existing across education authorities and schools. For example, individual educational programme (IEP), personal learning plan (PLP), more formally a co-ordinated support plan (CSP) and multi-agency support plans (MASP). This guidance uses the term ‘support for learning plan’ as a basis for supporting a child’s access to and progress in a relevant and appropriate curriculum.
How generic policies and initiatives support schools and Travelling families

Curriculum for Excellence

‘To ensure that Curriculum for Excellence is a curriculum for all children and young people, it is essential that support is provided to remove barriers that might restrict their access to the curriculum because of their circumstances or short or longer term needs.’

A series of documents, ‘Building the Curriculum’, provides advice, guidance and policy for different aspects of Curriculum for Excellence. All these documents are available to download from Learning and Teaching Scotland’s website, which includes some useful additional information and advice.

Building the Curriculum 3 is a key document for all practitioners. It lays out the framework for learning and teaching. While it is a technical document for curriculum planners, all practitioners should be familiar with key aspects of it, such as the six entitlements for all children and young people. One of these six entitlements is for every child and young person to develop skills for life and skills for work, with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Building the Curriculum 4 focuses on developing skills for learning, life and work, which has relevance for Travelling families.

Children and young people are also entitled to personal support to enable them to:
- review their learning and plan for next steps
- gain access to learning activities which will meet their needs
- plan opportunities for personal achievement
- prepare for changes and choices and be supported through changes and choices.

If they are to become successful, confident, responsible and effective adults who can meet the rapidly changing challenges of life and work in the 21st century, all young people will need to be flexible and adaptable, with the capacity to continue developing a range of new skills for learning, life and work throughout their lives.

Curriculum for Excellence in action

One school worked with children, young people and parents from the Showmen’s community to produce an exhibition for school and local communities that showed how Showmen’s cultural diversity fits within the communities they visit during the travelling season. School staff enabled the children to improve their communication and literacy skills, increase the range of their ICT skills and develop their photography skills. The children used cameras to record how the fair was set up and taken down in each town. By using cameras the children were able to showcase their ‘wonderful life’ through words and images. Their families welcomed and actively supported these processes as a way of telling others about who they are and how they work and hopefully to challenge racist beliefs. On their return the exhibition that families helped staff to set up was shared initially with the wider school community.

Curriculum for Excellence helped children, families and staff to present their experiences and achieve learning outcomes about Showmen’s cultures and lifestyles, and the contributions families make to Scottish towns’ economies and cultural celebrations.
Curriculum for Excellence is supported by a coherent framework for assessment, (Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment), through which evidence of learning can be gathered and interpreted to best meet the needs of learners. This includes the views of young people in identifying their own strengths and areas for improvement.

Building the Curriculum 5 seeks to ensure that evidence of learning is gathered and used in appropriate ways, and that assessment processes help inform the development of personalised learning planning. This allows a child to include their prior family learning from which plans can be made for their next steps in learning. The objectives of a personalised learning plan are to:

- encourage self-evaluation
- empower the learner and help encourage independent learning
- support transition through learning stages
- engage all those involved in the individual’s education by promoting partnership working
- ensure that new learning builds on a pupil’s prior learning and takes account of family-based knowledge and skills
- identify and help address broader needs
- contribute to the health and wellbeing of learners
- encourage development of the four capacities as set out in Curriculum for Excellence
- improve pupil attainment and achievement.

Education authorities and schools are encouraged to use individualised support for learning plans to identify the impact of interrupted learning on a pupil’s progress and any additional support needs they may have.
A number of hand-held education records have been developed across the UK to support learning continuity and reduce repeated reassessments experienced by many mobile Travellers. Used largely by base schools for Showmen’s families, hand-held records cover the curriculum and are updated by schools prior to each travelling season. Class teachers and support for learning staff in the schools visited while travelling are asked to use these and contribute to their upkeep. Showmen’s families are encouraged to use the record and to see that it is updated and brought back to the base schools.

In Scotland, a My Learning Record (MLR) – an initial curricular transfer record for mobile children – is available for use by Gypsy/Traveller children. The MLR was designed to support children and their new teachers with enough up-to-date information to develop a plan and provide for a child’s immediate educational needs. These records support home–school partnerships and encourage positive partnership responsibility for mobile pupils’ progress.

More effective assessment and recording processes are achieved when children, young people and families are involved in their setting up and reviewing of the record as they travel, as it helps them to realise how their everyday skills are linked to their success in learning. Schools will benefit from keeping families aware of continual assessment processes and particularly dates and times of subject assessments and set examinations, by providing oral, written, text and telephone messages to confirm dates and venues. Good communications around these issues help to increase participation and accreditation.
Additional support needs - Travelling children and young people

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Acts (2004 and 2009) require local authorities to identify, meet and keep under review the needs of all pupils for whom they are responsible, including Gypsy and Traveller children in Scotland. At the heart of the Act is the flexible and inclusive concept of ‘additional support needs’; this concept recognises Travelling children and young people’s learning needs and will help identify each child’s additional support needs (as an individual not as a member of a community). An associated Code of Practice has been prepared to support local education authorities in their implementation of the legislation.

Some Traveller children and young people may have additional support needs for short-term reasons, while others may need help long-term. For instance, additional support may be required for a child or young person who:

- is being bullied
- has behavioural or learning difficulties
- is deaf or blind
- is particularly gifted
- is bereaved
- is a carer
- is not a regular school attender.

It is important to recognise that these are only a few examples. There is no limit to the reasons that can give rise to having additional support needs. This is why the Act aims to ensure that all children and young people receive the additional support they require to meet their individual needs and help them make the most of their education.
All educational legislation applies to all children and young people in Scotland – this includes Travellers. The Scottish Government’s Children Missing from Education (CME) initiative aims to keep children and young people ‘safe and well’ and ‘in education’ (www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/08/0191408/14115). The CME(S) guidelines recommend that ‘when a child is missing, the local authority carries out a search across their area prior to a referral to CME(S) who will then co-ordinate searches across Scotland (and beyond where appropriate)’. The website suggests that ‘children who are missing from education are recognised as being vulnerable and in need of support’ by local authorities. Guidance is being developed to assist schools in appropriate referrals to CME. Every education authority in Scotland has a CME officer and a School to School officer whose contact details can be found on the ScotXed website (www.scotxed.net/default.aspx).

The complexities of overlapping legislation require that each case be addressed on an individual basis. When a Traveller family is mobile, for example, and there is a child of school age who is thought to be missing from school education without any arrangement for their support and learning, sensitivity is required so that families are not inappropriately chased. This is particularly important in situations where some of the family attend school, for example primary, and an older sibling of secondary age is not attending school.

Authorised absence categories are applicable for those occasions when Traveller families are mobile for work purposes and for significant cultural events that bring them together as a community, such as weddings, funerals and the annual horse fairs. Where schools have built up a relationship with a regular cohort of Gypsy/Traveller or Showmen’s children and young people, they have been welcoming. By accepting pupils’ lifestyles, school staff have found flexible ways to respond to their pupils’ current needs. Most importantly, they have shown respect for Gypsy/Traveller families’ reluctance to divulge details of their movements. There are many mobile families from other backgrounds who may have similar uncertainties about their movements or may have needs for privacy, which schools are encouraged to respect.

CME(S) initiatives are linked to More Choices, More Chances (www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Life-Long-Learning/16581), a Scottish Government initiative which aims to ensure that every young person has a clear pathway from school into learning post-16, with supported transitions and sustained opportunities. Both initiatives have relevance for secondary-aged young people from all Traveller communities.
How to enable education for children & young people with interrupted learning

Ethos – in schools and out-of-school settings

Given the high levels of racism experienced by Travellers in their daily lives, particularly Gypsies/Travellers, it is not unusual for such attitudes to be evident in schools. It is important that local authorities take comprehensive steps to ensure that all their staff, and those with whom they work, carry out their statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Information on the experiences of Travellers should be included in any training in equality issues and anti-racist approaches for staff and parents. Parents will thus be able to actively support their school’s endeavours in relation to reducing discrimination and welcoming Travellers to their locality. The Scottish Government’s support for parents’ engagement in education can be viewed online at www.LTSScotland.org.uk/parentzone.

Curriculum for Excellence provides many opportunities for presenting positive images of Travelling communities in all areas of the curriculum. The LTS web services, including appropriate Glow communities, could perhaps provide references and images of Travellers which would assist schools in their exploration of themes and help them understand the issues faced by Travellers in everyday life. Rather than focusing on stereotyped characterisations of Travellers, these images could challenge stereotypes of ‘the Gypsy’ as exotic/demonised/romanticised, as is so often portrayed in literature and the media.

Schools are encouraged to review their resources and to:

- ensure there are hard copies of factually correct and positive images of Travelling communities within their libraries
- encourage use of the internet to access readily available publications portraying the range and diversity of Travelling families’ lives, for example:
  - online access to ‘Travellers’ Times’ provides a wide range of images, many of which have been prepared by Travellers
  - culturally appropriate resources produced by teachers are available on the LTS website and Glow.

Direct engagement between Travellers and non-Travellers helps to challenge stereotypes and prejudices, while enhancing the self-esteem of the communities themselves. Good examples include schoolchildren being invited into mobile homes on sites and to participate in cultural events. A visit to the funfair is also a good way to introduce children and young people to travelling show and fairground people. The oral traditions of Travelling communities are frequently supported by short-term funding, for example to support storytellers in schools. Schools can contact STEP for information, advice and support on staff development, as well as information on local projects.

Curriculum for Excellence supports a school’s approaches to keeping all its pupils ‘safe and well’ by ensuring that such approaches are clear for all its pupils. In turn, pupils must be positively encouraged to appreciate the rights and responsibilities they have for contributing to a welcoming school environment – for newcomers from any cultural background.
A positive ethos in schools is vital to raising children and young people’s attainment and achievement. Central to this is the eradication of racist and discriminatory behaviour among staff and pupils. All schools are required to have an anti-bullying policy that has to be made available on request. Respectme (www.respectme.org.uk), Scotland’s Scottish Government funded anti-bullying network, will provide training for educators and support policy writers’ identification of clear approaches for resolving bullying problems.

Good communication is key to a positive ethos in schools. Supporting parents as well as pupils is critical to the success of any long-term improvements. In addition to providing written materials, other ways of communicating may be more effective, such as giving information face to face, over the telephone or through CDs or DVDs. A school’s communication strategy may include a proactive use of newsletters, conferences and the internet. Families need information about any local authority support networks, as well as Enquire, the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, which provides information about a range of other support services, for example ParentLine Scotland and Respectme. These services can be particularly valuable where a breakdown in communications occurs between a family and school staff, or between parent and child.

One education authority has embedded its support for Gypsy/Traveller families within anti-bullying and anti-racist practices. One tangible and practical approach is to use buddies and peer support strategies. Circle time, ‘no-blame’ discussion sessions and pupil councils also offer opportunities to deal with negative attitudes. In secondary schools, mentoring by selected staff, senior pupils, students in higher and further education and local employers has contributed to increased pupil confidence and improved attendance and staying-on rates. In some schools, an identified ‘safe place to go’ helps a Traveller pupil in times of ‘worry’ to talk things through with a sympathetic member of staff.
Supporting access to formal education

In Scotland formal education covers all children and young people from 3 to 18 years of age. All children are entitled to opportunities for developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

Pre-school provision
Gypsy/Traveller families strongly believe in the role of the family in bringing up their children. Gypsy/Traveller families are now more likely to build on the play and learning experiences enjoyed with other Travellers, in a variety of home environments, by taking up pre-school opportunities. Gypsy/Travellers have also benefited from the Bookstart initiative, which helps families support literacy from an early age (www.bookstart.org.uk/Home). Mobility and difficulties in accessing information about education in the early years continue to be areas where families require educators’ support and advice.

Enrolment in primary school
Regular personal contact with Gypsy/Traveller families has been shown to increase attendance in primary schools. Support for learning staff are best placed to promote education in schools by encouraging families through the practicalities of enrolment processes and simultaneously by supporting school staff in building their initial relationships with a Gypsy/Traveller family. Within schools, it has proved effective to identify a key member of staff with a remit to communicate directly with Traveller families. A key contact person becomes a familiar and trusted person to families and can help develop mutual respect and understanding between other school staff and Traveller families. Research has also shown a gradual increase in the numbers of schools recording Traveller children and young people on their school rolls.

Good practice in accessing learning at pre-school stage
On-site portacabins or a Playbus provide a space in which support staff can offer opportunities for early learning. Staff can make contact and build trusting relationships with families that allow for sharing information about relevant local initiatives. Mother and toddler groups, for example, provide mothers and other carers with an opportunity to experience play activities that are difficult to provide in a small trailer. Gypsy/Traveller families gain confidence in this familiar and non-threatening place, where support staff are able to encourage families to access mainstream nursery and primary school settings. One authority is running an on-site nursery for the catchment area. Gypsy/Traveller children gain confidence by mixing with children from the settled community in a larger group setting and at an earlier stage.

Good practice to support school enrolment and attendance at primary stage
A period of preparatory work with a Gypsy/Traveller child may be needed before attending school. For families making their first contact with support staff prior to enrolment, good practice could include an initial assessment of prior learning before introducing the children to the formality of school. Once children are in school, further good practice would involve homework support sessions. Such support may take place in a portacabin; however, the range of experiences that can be provided in this setting is limited, and is best viewed as provision to support eventual access to primary school.
Enrolment in secondary school
Traveller families recognise that in a changing society young people need learning opportunities that include access to learning and certification in the skills perceived to have direct relevance to employment opportunities. Curriculum for Excellence recommends flexible access to a personalised curriculum, supported by multi-agency approaches and negotiated access to courses, sometimes through links to further education colleges and other initiatives. While secondary-aged Gypsy/Travellers are keen to continue their education beyond primary school, there is a continued reluctance by young Gypsy/Travellers to engage in mainstream secondary education.

Showmen or travelling show and fairground families
During the winter months, Showmen’s families don’t travel, but live in a ‘yard’ (a place where each family’s static trailer is located, alongside their rides and vehicles). Showmen’s children mostly attend local Glasgow primary and secondary schools. These schools allocate children a permanent place on the school roll, and while they are travelling the school retains responsibility for each individual child’s education. Parents are expected to inform the school of the family’s departure/likely return dates so that the school can keep accurate records.

Good practice to support school enrolment and attendance at secondary stage
An on-site portacabin provides a safe, easily accessed space for homework support for secondary-aged Travellers. Sometimes this simply involves access to word processing facilities. In one authority, an ICT support service bus provides connectivity as part of its services for young people. This bus visits the site on a regular basis to encourage Gypsy/Traveller young people to extend their learning opportunities. The same setting can also be used to support a pupil’s negotiated part-time access to a flexible curriculum. A few education authorities deliver a Teenage Traveller project as a way of encouraging their continuing engagement with education. This provision is a good interim solution to encourage young people to access learning. Engagement with school-based learning should always be encouraged to ensure that young people are aware of the choices that schools offer.

When they are travelling, Showmen’s children go to school in lots of different places. If they are unable to attend a school some education authorities provide support for learning - a teacher may visit them at home, ie in their trailer at the local fair. Support teachers help the children and young people to work with the distance learning materials provided by their Glasgow school. Glasgow runs an after-school club known as the Arcade Club, which is set up for the Showmen’s children to help them catch up on any gaps in their learning.

Each section of the Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain appoints one or two education liaison officers (ELOs), who work voluntarily within the Showmen’s community to support pupils, parents and teachers. The Scottish Section, the largest section, currently has three ELOs, who recently set up the Scottish Showmen’s Guild website. (www.scottishshowmensguild.co.uk).
Experiences leading to positive outcomes

Designated staff working with families and schools will help allay families' fears and raise expectations by:

- encouraging peer support
- ensuring that all staff have an understanding of Scotland’s diverse Travelling communities and cultures
- identifying a key person as first point of contact for families
- having anti-bullying and anti-racist policies – clearly communicated to parents and evidently practised in the day-to-day life of the school community
- ensuring that references to Travelling cultures are embedded in the curriculum
- negotiating individualised learning
- valuing prior family-based learning and its links to formal learning
- using existing support for learning strategies
- ensuring children and young people are progressing well in their learning, attainment and achievement
- noting positive outcomes/destinations, for example qualifications, college placements, employment, vocational skills links to family business
- ensuring school staff maintain contacts with other schools used by mobile families
- encouraging families to use a child’s My Learning Record (which provides initial curricular information) when engaging with schools and other support services as they travel.

Registration and transition

Gypsy/Traveller families’ comparisons between the learning and skills offered by primary schools and those offered by secondary schools influence their decisions about whether to register their children and young people in formal education.

Families value basic life skills taught in primary whereas the secondary curriculum may be viewed as inappropriate to their cultures and irrelevant in terms of employment aspirations. With the development of Curriculum for Excellence there is now more flexibility within schools.

Primary schooling is considered as more flexible compared with the rigid timetabling associated with secondary schooling. Again, the development of Curriculum for Excellence now allows education authorities and schools to develop curriculum structures to meet the needs of the children and young people they serve. Schools working positively with Gypsy/Traveller families recognise that there is likely to be a mismatch between families’ values and expectations of education and what schools are providing.

Most Gypsy/Traveller families now recognise a need to continue learning beyond primary school. As with any child, the transition from primary school to secondary school can be fraught with anxiety, but for Gypsy/Travellers these anxieties are heightened, and may lead to a decision to opt out of secondary schooling by not engaging in registration processes.

Experienced educators working directly with Gypsy/Traveller families recommend that education authorities provide designated support services to enable Gypsy/Traveller young people to take advantage of Curriculum for Excellence approaches and the more flexible accreditation options associated with 16+ Learning Choices. School staff and Traveller families are encouraged to use existing support networks, for example TENET, and support documentation, for example a My Learning Record, as part of a planned transfer from one school to another or one stage to another. Support and relevant documentation are accessible through the STEP website.
Support for learning

Support for learning staff aim to get it right for every Traveller child by working collaboratively with a range of other professionals (such as site managers, community police and voluntary organisations) to build positive links between families and schools. In working directly with the communities, levels of trust are built up so that parents anxious for their children’s wellbeing are encouraged to allow their children to participate more fully in school education. Designated staff are able to teach young people who, without some basic literacy skills, would find it difficult to make progress along with their peers in a school.

Designated staff are experiencing more success in encouraging Gypsy/Traveller families to register their children in primary schools, as more families are supporting the regular attendance of children in primary schools. These achievements and any future developments rely on designated staff having a capacity to offer education in out-of-school settings as a bridge into formal learning.

The Gypsy Traveller Creative Learning Group (GTCLG) started in 2003. Its Gypsy/Traveller Project worker worked with Universal Connections staff in Larkhall to secure funding from South Lanarkshire Council and the then Scottish Executive to support a teacher to work part-time (0.4 FTE) with Gypsy/Traveller young people of secondary school age. Larkhall Academy agreed to supply a part-time teacher (0.4 FTE) a week, on what was seen as a pilot project. The GTCLG, while still classed as a pilot, has been visited three times by HM Inspectors of Education, two of whom described the project as an example of excellence.

Through researching Gypsy/Traveller cultures and ways of life, and by liaising with outside agencies, a learning programme has been developed that has relevance for Gypsy/Traveller pupils. It aims to enable GTCLG pupils to become deeper thinkers and provide them with learning opportunities that will enrich their lives. Informed by Curriculum for Excellence, pupils are encouraged to become responsible citizens by taking into account others’ thoughts, beliefs and actions, and their learning is helping them develop skills that can be carried on through their entire lives.

GTCLG is developing its provision. South Lanarkshire Council has recognised a need for increased staffing: the recent appointment of a new colleague will enable staff to meet Gypsy/Traveller pupils’ aspirations to gain qualifications. The main focus of learning and teaching for this year is numeracy and literacy along with health and wellbeing. The learning programme takes into consideration the needs of Gypsy/Travellers whose learning is interrupted due to family and cultural reasons, and the demands of their families’ employment opportunities.
Within schools, designated support teachers or a school’s key identified support for learning staff are best deployed flexibly, such as for family liaison work, contacting previous schools, carrying out a rapid assessment, providing short-term intensive support on arrival, or the identification and production of appropriate resources. STEP has produced the IRAG to provide a class teacher or teachers working in out-of-school settings with some fun activities that will enable a quick assessment of a mobile pupil’s learning needs. Used in conjunction with a pupil’s MLR (if they have one – downloadable from the STEP website), the IRAG allows a Traveller pupil’s learning to be planned and makes it easier to place them within suitable peer groups, both ability and mixed ability, as appropriate, to achieve planned learning outcomes and to encourage social inclusion. Supported study sessions, including homework time on Gypsy/Traveller sites, help raise attainments. On return from travelling, Showmen’s children benefit from supported study sessions provided by base schools.

Homework for all Traveller pupils is best tailored to take advantage of the strengths within their families and communities. School staff are advised to be sensitive to the limitations of space for those pupils living in a trailer and to be aware of the level of support that can be provided at home, whether a trailer or a house. Pupils may have limited access to a variety of everyday resources, such as paper and pens, newspapers and magazines, libraries and the internet.

Schools, teachers and designated support teachers can provide distance learning materials, including teaching plans and an updated hand-held record, for pupils to take with them to maintain continuity of learning when travelling. In secondary schools, subject departments and guidance staff as well as support for learning staff can also contribute to a pupil’s learning support needs. Throughout periods of absence, teacher and peer contacts are to be encouraged through telephone calls, texts and email messaging. Curriculum for Excellence is an opportunity for teachers and support services to deliver a flexible and relevant curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Personalised learning planning for every pupil is key to their progress during periods of mobility or interruptions to learning as it helps inform the content of distance learning.
Distance learning and information and communication technologies (ICT)

Distance learning is a way of meeting the learning needs of those who experience periods of interrupted learning for example by not attending school. Essentially, distance learning delivers the curriculum and opportunities for feedback for pupils learning in out-of-school settings or while mobile. Based on the pupil’s support plan, appropriate learning materials may be delivered as paper-based resources or through ICT formats.

There is no one accepted model. Ample evidence from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and elsewhere shows that distance learning can provide cost-effective support for pupils unable to attend any one school for a significant period. NATT+ has delivered a series of ICT-supported projects known collectively as ELAMP, which has enabled a range of Traveller children and young people to access and make progress with their learning while travelling, and importantly to maintain contacts with their peers and teachers at their base schools. Research has shown that many Travelling children prefer a blended approach, including paper-based resources, face-to-face contact and access to ICT-supported resources. Access to appropriate resources and teaching support require careful planning to meet a Traveller pupil’s specific needs.

Early reports, the 8th and 9th Term Reports, and other research into Traveller education documented the urgent need for a Scottish ICT-supported initiative to deliver learning for mobile Gypsy/Traveller pupils. It is important to bear in mind that access to telephone links and suitable power supplies is not always readily available to mobile families who live in trailers. The technologies currently available include videoconferencing, email, chatrooms and the use of web browsers. These tools can efficiently deliver electronic copies of paper-based materials or rich multimedia suited to a variety of learning styles. They allow learners to access learning materials, carry out assessments and receive advice from a tutor, while simultaneously enabling a tutor to track learners’ progress, record achievements and communicate regularly with all their pupils. Use of these tools has resulted in greater motivation, higher staying-on rates and more formal qualifications for some pupils from Showmen’s families. The technologies will allow for more easy transference of pupils’ records of progress and achievements when they transfer from one school to another or from one authority to another.

One Gypsy/Traveller support service has developed science-based activities for use in distance learning settings. All activities were designed to encourage working within a family, which was needed to complete the tasks, and prepared with minimum resource requirements so that an activity could be completed within the limited space of a trailer. One task for example involved using card to build a battery powered vehicle. Another task involved working with magnets.
eLATES - Scotland’s e-learning community for Travelling young people
(www.scottishtravellered.net/elates.html)

Developments at Learning and Teaching Scotland including Glow, a groundbreaking Scottish educational intranet, are enabling anytime/anywhere communications across Scotland between educators and learners and between learners. Glow offers a range of tools to successfully meet the learning and teaching requirements of educators and school-based and distance-based learners. The Scottish Government’s commitment to equality and inclusion for the diverse Travelling communities living in Scotland is reflected in their recent award to STEP of funding for a facilitator to work with and support self-identified education authorities to deliver a research-based model e-learning community. The virtual learning environment (VLE), which lies at the heart of this model of distance learning for Scotland’s Travelling communities, is hosted and delivered by Glow, Scotland’s schools digital network.

Flexible opportunities and effective distance learning help educators meet the learning needs of Travellers not able to regularly attend school. By combining with other strategies and initiatives such as More Choices, More Chances and developments in further education colleges, teachers of Travelling children will be better placed to meet the learning needs of secondary-aged Travellers.

Called eLearning and Traveller Education Scotland (eLATES), the e-learning community aims to raise achievement levels among Scotland’s Travelling young people by supporting their entitlement to a school education and by increasing the flexibility of their access to a relevant and continuous curriculum. By providing internet access to learning, eLATES is designed to mitigate the impact of interrupted learning through its blended learning approach. Young people’s limited face-to-face contact with their teachers will be enhanced by their ability to communicate through the VLE. Glasgow City Council’s Interrupted Learning Service’s considerable experience in providing ICT-supported distance learning for mobile Showmen’s children will contribute to the success of eLATES.
Education authorities’ allocation of additional funding or other forms of resource provision is vital to schools’ ability to support inclusive education. Many Travellers enrol their children in schools with the result that per capita allowances are triggered in the same way as for any child.

Education authorities will be aware of Gypsy/Traveller sites (both council and private) and Showmen’s yards within their boundaries, including temporary fairgrounds. Targeted provision is generally provided to support the schools that the families use, particularly when a school requires an immediate response when enrolling a sizeable number of children. For a short-term stay it can be more efficient to offer additional support to children on site. It is important to bear in mind a school’s need for adequate resources, including ICT, to enable staff to provide distance learning for Traveller pupils. Provision of educational support in non-traditional settings also requires funding.

Schools across education authorities can be resourced through a variety of formulae, for example funding allocation may reflect an area’s level of deprivation among its local populations. Education authorities vary in how their provision of support is allocated, for example indirectly through advisory support staff, or directly to a pupil or a group of pupils. The character of support can vary from proactive to reactive. Education authorities’ delivery of educational support for Travelling families varies and tends towards one of three general models of support: providing in-school support in mainstream education; a specific service providing in-school and out-of-school support; or specific identified staff providing in-school and out-of-school support.

Education authorities’ organisation of educational services varies for each perceived community, for example Glasgow City Council’s Showmen children and young people are enrolled in base schools. These generally provide distance learning when families travel. While many Gypsy/Traveller families are settled and may attend a local school, mobile families continue to arrive unexpectedly at schools, where children may be enrolled for indeterminate periods of time.

Funding does not follow mobile children and young people, either from Travelling families or from families mobile for different reasons, for example those belonging to Her Majesty’s forces; it remains with the education authority where the children were enrolled at the time of the school census. A receiving education authority’s allocation of support for individual mobile families varies; specific funding may not be allocated or may be allocated for a group for example a Gypsy/Traveller service.

Key legislation and policy changes requiring that families, including children and young people, have rights in relation to educational provision, inevitably have funding implications for education providers. Education authorities will be aware of Gypsy/Traveller sites (both council and private) and of Showmen’s temporary fairs, within their boundaries. Due to mobility, children from these communities will have additional support needs that require appropriate and adequate resources, for example ICT-supported distance learning. Appropriate transport arrangements are an important factor in ensuring regular attendance of Gypsies/Travellers; issues of safety may need to be considered as sites are often situated on roads without pavements or easy access to bus routes. Requirements for transport may fluctuate as families move on and off sites. Other mobile children can have similar fluctuating transport needs. Where education authorities use funds to support more flexible arrangements, pupils may be able to attend schools.
Summary of strategies

Education authorities, schools and support services are encouraged to promote and support inclusive educational approaches for Travelling families, and other children experiencing interrupted learning, by taking into account the following strategies.

Education authorities are encouraged to show leadership by:

- ensuring all children and young people from Gypsy and Travelling communities experience Curriculum for Excellence
- monitoring, collating information about and dealing effectively with any concerns about or incidents of bullying and racism by creating a safe and welcoming environment
- appointing a designated senior management officer to take responsibility for progressing initiatives to raise formal attainment and achievements of children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller communities (applicable for all learners known to experience interrupted learning)
- providing other agencies and professionals working with Gypsy and Traveller communities with accurate information about their support for children and young people from these communities (applicable for all learners known to experience interrupted learning)
- ensuring that all local authority staff have opportunities to access accurate knowledge about Travelling families in Scotland so that they can sensitively address the needs of Travelling families, for example for privacy regarding their Traveller status and different patterns of mobility
- ensuring that mainstream policies and strategies are flexibly applied when addressing Gypsy and Traveller children and young people’s individual learning needs and any additional support needs
- monitoring enrolment, attendance, attainment and achievement for children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller, Occupational Traveller, for example Showmen, and Roma communities, and all learners known to experience interrupted learning
- ensuring that schools take full responsibility for all pupils on their roll, including children and young people from mobile families
- ensuring that provision of pre-school, school and post-school placing requests take account of a Traveller family’s social concerns, for example enrolling all children from a family group (siblings and cousins) in the same school
- considering how best to take account of children and young people’s views in making decisions regarding accessing learning in non-school settings
- allocating additional resources, including provision of transport, to assist schools’ flexible responses in supporting inclusion of Travelling families, for example when Gypsy/Traveller sites are located far from local bus routes
- encouraging schools and families to use My Learning Records and the parental leaflet Keeping in Touch: documents designed to promote continuity of learning and maintaining families’ contact with schools as they travel
- ensuring that attendance at school is negotiated and supported by flexible access to education in schools and in out-of-school settings
- evaluating existing ICT-supported distance-learning projects that provide ‘anytime, anywhere’ opportunities for accessing learning, particularly for pupils whose families cross authority boundaries.
- considering the impact of multiple roles and remits on support for learning staff (for example, those who are part of an integrated support service or Traveller education service) and their capacity to promote and support educational inclusion for Traveller children and young people
- ensuring that support staff can participate in TENET to strengthen their professional knowledge of how to meet the learning needs of children and young people from Traveller communities and others from increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds.
Schools are encouraged to develop inclusive strategies by:

- identifying a senior member of staff to progress flexibility in curriculum design and delivery within the principles of Curriculum for Excellence
- recognising Traveller children and young people's additional support needs, for example where a child is not a regular attender or is being bullied
- recording, monitoring and dealing effectively with any concerns and incidents of bullying and racism
- monitoring enrolment, attendance, attainment and achievement for children and young people from Gypsy and Traveller, Occupational Traveller, for example Showmen, and Roma communities, and all learners known to experience interrupted learning
- developing more effective communications with parents, especially mobile families (for example through a range of media such as mobile phones)
- identifying the learning opportunities provided by families and communities and building on children and young people’s culturally specific learning
- working with a range of agencies, for example health and housing, to support and improve families' access to education (Getting it right for every child)
- providing a contact point for information about national support services, for example Enquire and Respectme.

Support services are encouraged to support families and schools by:

- liaising with a designated senior management officer in developing accurate information about the education authority’s services for children and young people from Traveller communities
- liaising with a designated senior management officer in developing and acquiring accurate cultural information about the lives of the education authority’s Traveller communities
- being prepared to act in an advocacy role for a Gypsy/Traveller child while upholding the integrity of the family
- working with a range of agencies, for example health and housing, to support and improve families’ access to education (Getting it right for every child)
- supporting links between schools and families by making and maintaining personal contact with families
- supporting a school’s promotion of parental involvement in their children and young people’s education
- supporting a school’s development of anti-bullying and anti-racist policies by providing information on local authority support networks and Respectme, Scotland's anti-bullying service.
- This guidance recommends that education authorities monitor the progress of children and young people with interrupted learning and ensure that they are making appropriate progress, attaining well and achieving their full potential within Curriculum for Excellence. The STEP website (www.scottishtravellered.net) provides further information and support regarding these strategies along with relevant information for educational professionals and other professionals working with Scotland’s Travelling communities.
References & contacts

Secretary of State for Scotland’s Advisory Committee (1998) Scotland’s Travelling People: Eighth Term Report

Secretary of State for Scotland’s Advisory Committee (1999) Scotland’s Travelling People: Ninth Term Report

Scottish Parliament, Equal Opportunities Committee (2001) Inquiry into Gypsy Travellers and Public Sector Policies (two reports)

See relevant information:
Equality Act 2010
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2010/ukpga_20100015_en_1

The Scottish Government – People and Society
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality

Travellers’ Times
The Rural Media Company, Sullivan House, 72–80 Widemarsh Street, Hereford HR4 9HG
Tel: 01432 344039
Email: travellerstimes@ruralmedia.co.uk
The Rural Media Company is a charity and company limited by guarantee. It combines community and informal media education and training with the professional skills of the media industry to provide online and paper-based news, pictures and opportunities for joining in discussions and activities related to Travelling communities in the United Kingdom.

Article 12 Scotland
www.article12.org/gypsytraveller.html
Established in 1996, Article 12 in Scotland is a young person led network that works to promote young people’s participation and information rights as set out in international human rights charters. Access information and resources through Article 12’s website.

Enquire – The Scottish Advice Service for Additional Support for Learning
www.enquire.org.uk Helpline: 0845 123 2303
Enquire can provide information and advice to children and young people, parents and professionals. It hopes this empowers parents, children and young people to make the right choices for their child’s education and supports professionals.

Respectme – Scotland’s Anti-bullying Service
www.respectme.org.uk
Respectme works with all adults who have a role to play in the lives of children and young people, to give them the practical skills and confidence to deal with bullying behaviour.

Show Racism the Red Card
PO Box 141, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, NE26 3YH
Tel: 0191 257 8519 Fax: 0191 257 8541
Email: info@theredcard.org, www.srtrc.org
Show Racism the Red Card is an anti-racist charity established in 1996. It aims to produce anti-racist educational resources which harness the high profile of professional footballers to combat racism. These include ‘Out of Site: Challenging Racism towards Gypsy, Roma and Travellers’, which specifically addresses how to combat racism in relation to Travelling families (www.srtrc.org/resources/publications).

Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP)
Dr Pauline Padfield, Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP), Room 2.18, Charteris Land, Institute of Education Development and Leadership, The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh EH8 8AQ
Tel: 0131 651 6440
Email: Pauline.Padfield@ed.ac.uk
www.scottishtravellered.net
STEP office open Tuesdays and Thursdays

e-Learning and Traveller Education Scotland (eLATES)
Room 2.05, Charteris Land, Institute of Education Development and Leadership, The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh EH8 8AQ
Tel: 0131 651 6444 Email: jean.oliver@ed.ac.uk
www.scottishtravellered.net/elates.html
Work days: Tuesday and Thursday

Elphinstone Institute
Aberdeen University, MacRobert Building, King’s College, 24 High Street, Aberdeen AB23 5UA
Tel: 01224 272996 Email: elphinstone@abdn.ac.uk
www.abdn.ac.uk/~wap001/