



House of Commons  
Women and Equalities  
Committee

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**Tackling inequalities  
faced by Gypsy,  
Roma and Traveller  
communities:  
Government and  
Ofsted response to the  
Committee's Seventh  
Report of Session  
2017–19**

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**Ninth Special Report of  
Session 2017–19**

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## Women and Equalities Committee

The Women and Equalities Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Government Equalities Office (GEO).

### Current membership

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### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Jyoti Chandola (Clerk), Radhika Handa and Luanne Middleton (Second Clerks), Holly Dustin, Tansy Hutchinson, and Shai Jacobs (Committee Specialists), Renuka Rawlins (Inquiry Manager), Ellie Goodchild (Senior Committee Assistant), Mandy Sullivan (Committee Assistant), and Liz Parratt and Simon Horswell (Media Officers).

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# Ninth Special Report

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The Women and Equalities Committee published its Seventh Report of Session 2017–19, *Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities* (HC 360), on 5 April 2019. The Government and Ofsted responses were received on 14 June 2019 and are appended to this report.

## Appendix 1: Government Response

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### Section 1: introduction

1. The Government welcomes the Committee's report. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities have historically been less healthy, less well educated, and indeed had shorter lives than most other communities in this country. Our recent Race Disparity Audit produced further evidence which demonstrated the serious disparities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. On almost every measure, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are significantly worse off than the general population.
2. Gypsies and Irish Travellers are the ethnic group with the lowest proportion of respondents who are economically active (47%, compared to 63% for the general population).
3. Gypsies and Irish Travellers are the ethnic group with the lowest proportion who describe their general health as good or very good (70% compared to 81% of the general population).
4. In schools, pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds have the lowest attainment of all ethnic groups and are the least likely to stay in education after the age of 18.
5. We remain committed to tackling these, and other, serious disparities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
6. The Government heard, with some concern, the Committee's findings regarding the prevalence of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. These issues are deep-rooted, and it is an area of great concern to the Government.
7. The Government is respectful of the cultural heritage of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. However, we are clear that we will not tolerate cultural practices which endorse or encourage violence and abuse, both physical and emotional, against women and girls. We will be looking to maintain a serious focus on this area as we take forward work supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
8. Turning to the recent work of Government; as the Committee heard, following on from the serious disparities highlighted by the Race Disparity Audit, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have provided £200,000 of funding between six projects which aim to improve outcomes in the areas of educational attainment, health and social integration.

9. MHCLG have also funded 22 projects which, in whole or in part, support Roma communities across England through the Controlling Migration Fund.

10. In addition, MHCLG have provided funding to two projects to improve the reporting of hate crime by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

11. However, the Government recognises that members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities continue to have the poorest outcomes in society. In order to rectify this, we further recognise that an ambitious programme of work needs to be undertaken across Government.

12. The Committee has provided a number of recommendations for us to consider. Government's responses, below, are arranged thematically, so may not be the same order in which the Committee made the recommendations. For ease of reference, all are numbered in accordance with the paragraph number at which they appear in the 'Conclusions and Recommendations' section of the Committee's report.

## Committee Recommendations and Government Response

### Section 2: Strategy

**13. We recommend that the Cabinet Office create a specific workstream within the Race Disparity Unit for eliminating Gypsy and Traveller inequalities. The Unit should work closely across Government departments to ensure that the “explain or change” process is completed promptly and that every Government department has a strategy to tackle Gypsy and Traveller inequalities that are uncovered. Each department should have a strategy in place before the end of 2019. Because of a lack of statistical data, disparities that have been uncovered in academic research must be incorporated into this work and included as part of the Race Disparity Audit programme (Recommendation 3).**

14. As above, the Government agrees that an ambitious programme of work needs to be undertaken in order to tackle inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

15. MHCLG will lead in co-ordinating a cross-Government strategy to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. MHCLG will work closely with other Government departments including the Race Disparity Unit within the Cabinet Office, the Department for Education, the Department of Health and Social Care, the Government Equalities Office and the Home Office to develop the strategy.

16. The Government commends the value of the Committee's report and its findings. We agree that health and education inequalities are considerable, and must be tackled. We will also seek to develop proposals addressing the levels of violence against women and girls.

17. In addition, we are aware of a lack of integration and poor quality accommodation which needs to be tackled. We will be looking to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities on these issues as part of our wider strategy.

### Section 3: Integration and Data

18. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government should therefore write to us when the pilot projects are complete setting out the conclusion from the evaluations of the pilot projects, stating which ones will be taken forward, and setting out the Department's plan and timescales (Recommendation 4).

19. All pilot projects will complete internal evaluations and one project is being evaluated externally. Once all evaluations are complete, MHCLG will write to the Committee detailing the outcomes from the evaluation process and next steps.

20. The Race Disparity Unit should review all the Government and public datasets that currently do not use the 2011 census ethnicity classifications and require their use before the end of 2019 (Recommendation 7).

21. The Government agrees that the quality and coverage of data about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people should be improved.

22. As part of wider work on harmonising ethnicity classifications, the Race Disparity Unit is working with the Office for National Statistics to align the Government's approach to collecting data about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people with the proposed classifications in the 2021 Census round. The Census White Paper recommends the inclusion of a tick box to improve the identification of people from the Roma community specifically. The Race Disparity Unit and the Office for National Statistics are engaging with departments and agencies so that once the Census Order is approved, those responsible for administrative systems that record ethnicity can set out their commitment to use the 2021 Census classification.

23. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government should work with grassroots Gypsy, Roma and Traveller organisations to formulate a wide-ranging campaign to explain the importance of collecting such data and to encourage self-disclosure (Recommendation 9).

24. The Government acknowledges the need to improve data collection within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. To support this, the Government recognises the importance of identifying role models from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities who are able to support our work and promote shared values within those communities. We will work with stakeholders including the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and representatives from projects funded by MHCLG to test the potential for role models who can assist us in encouraging self-disclosure within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

### Section 4: Education

25. **The Department for Education should carry out a complete audit of all local authorities to ensure that they have robust policies and procedures on children potentially missing from education, as required by section 436A of the Education Act 2006 and the Government's own "Children Missing Education Guidance". Any local authorities that are found to have inadequate processes should be required to remedy them within six months of the audit. The audit should also inspect the procedures**

**that authorities have in place for ensuring that home educated children are receiving a “suitable” education, including effective mechanisms for taking action under section 437 of the Education Act (Recommendation 11).**

26. The Government has already taken significant steps to support local authorities in meeting their duties in relation to children missing education. In September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended to improve the education and welfare of pupils, through better information sharing between all schools and their local authorities where pupils are removed from and added to the school admission register. This will enable local authorities to better comply with their duty to make arrangements to establish (as far as it is possible) the identities of children of compulsory school age in their area who are not registered pupils at school and are not receiving suitable education other than at a school. In March the Department for Education (DfE) commenced a review to assess the extent of which the policy objectives of the 2016 amendments to the regulations have been achieved. The review findings will be published by 30 September 2019. This report, alongside the Timpson Review of school exclusion, will help DfE decide if further work is needed in this area.

**27. The Government should consider piloting a pupil passport scheme with rapid evaluation to ensure that, should it be successful, it can be rolled out as quickly as possible. At the same time, the Department for Education should explore how such a scheme could be implemented across England and what the budgetary implications would be. Such a scheme would ensure that when children move schools or move into home education, their records and history travel with them (Recommendation 14).**

28. The Government currently supports schools in two ways to understand the history of pupils joining them. ‘The Common Transfer File’ is a standardised electronic file format maintained by DfE and adopted by all relevant school software providers which allows schools to share common data about the pupil, and additional data can be pulled down by the school using DfE’s ‘Key to Success’ system. DfE are currently reviewing information sharing between schools and local authorities where pupils are removed from and added to the school admission register and will consider the issue further when the review has been completed. Further details of the review are included in the response to recommendation 11.

**29. The need for reform affects all home educated children but Gypsy and Traveller children are more likely to be withdrawn from education. We agree with Children’s Commissioner that families that are home educating need more oversight from local authorities. We also recommend that council officers should be given the power and have the duty to visit children being home educated at least once per school term to assess the suitability of their education. Education should only be deemed “suitable” if it provides equal life chances to boys and girls and gives all children the necessary tools to decide on their own futures as adults (Recommendation 12).**

30. The issue of local authority monitoring of the suitability of home education was covered in DfE’s 2018 call for evidence on the topic. However, in the Government response document published on 2 April 2019, it was announced that the Government did not intend to pursue the issue of further powers for local authorities to monitor the suitability of home education. Revised guidance for local authorities published at the same time sets out how effective use of existing powers can ensure that home education is suitable - or if it

is not, what action can be taken to secure school attendance. DfE are currently consulting on proposals for registration, and support for home educating families; the consultation ends on 24 June.

**31. Schools should, as part of their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty, be challenging race and gender stereotypes wherever they encounter them. Ofsted should ensure that inspectors are actively inspecting schools for gender and racial stereotyping or signs of sexism or racism from either pupils or staff (Recommendation 16).**

32. Schools should be safe and disciplined environments in which pupils, whatever their ethnic background, feel happy and able to fulfil their potential. No child should suffer the fear of prejudice or bullying. DfE expect schools to take a strong stand against all forms of prejudice or bullying, and schools should tackle issues at the earliest opportunity to prevent them from escalating. All schools are legally required to have a behaviour policy with measures to prevent all forms of bullying. They have the freedom to develop their own anti-bullying strategies appropriate to their environment and are held to account by Ofsted.

33. Ofsted have sent a separate response to the Committee for this recommendation (see Annex A).

**34. Schools have a duty to proactively plan for how they will have conversations with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents about what relationship and sex education involves and what parents' options are for their children, short of removing them from school. These plans should be explicit and Ofsted should take them into account during inspections and assess schools accordingly (Recommendation 19).**

35. In developing these subjects, DfE have taken the decision to strengthen the requirement for schools to consult parents on their Sex and Relationships Education policy by enshrining this in the legislation as well as the statutory guidance. Schools must consult parents on their proposed policy and any subsequent reviews of it; enabling parents the time and opportunity to input, ask questions and share concerns and for schools to then decide a reasonable way forward. Ongoing dialogue is important, and DfE recommend that this consultation is done annually so that new cohorts of parents have the opportunity to understand the school's approach and to help increase their confidence in the curriculum. Good practice is also likely to include the headteacher discussing with the parents any detrimental effects that withdrawal might have on the child, including any social and emotional effects of being excluded, for example receiving information from peers or from the internet.

36. We have set out in the draft statutory guidance good practice on parental involvement. We expect to share further effective examples of parental consultation in our forthcoming supplementary guide.

37. DfE will seek to further engage with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community via their Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stakeholder group and through cross-Government work aimed at supporting the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

38. Ofsted have sent a separate response to the Committee for this recommendation (see Annex A).

**39. There are multiple organisations in other fields that provide role models to speak and work with schools to foster good relations between groups. The Government should increase the capacity of these organisations to provide similar support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller role models (Recommendation 20).**

40. All learning and other experiences that each school provides for its pupils to give them the education and skills they need to achieve a fulfilling life makes up the school curriculum. Schools are free to enhance this, including through the use of role models or other sources of education, inspiration and support. It is individual schools, rather than central Government, who are best placed to decide how they do this, including through the type of provision they choose and which providers to use.

## **Section 5: Healthcare**

**41. Gypsy, Irish Traveller and Roma categories should be added to the NHS data dictionary as a matter of urgency (Recommendation 6).**

42. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is committed to improving data collections across the health service and to use this information to help reduce the health inequalities faced by a range of groups, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

43. NHS England continues to complete a scoping exercise identifying the equality monitoring data gathered across major NHS data sets and propose what equality data should be gathered and how. The decision to include Roma as an ethnic group in the 2021 Census is welcomed and is being considered as part of this ongoing work.

44. DHSC have a responsibility to ensure changes to data collections are carried out in a systematic and cost-effective manner. Therefore, the current work has been aligned with the 2021 Census White Paper consultation to prevent duplication and ensure a consistent approach across Government.

45. The NHS equality data collection review is a significant undertaking and has to consider all nine protected characteristics including the proposals contained in the 2021 Census White Paper which impact on data gathering in relation to protected characteristics in addition to race. Any proposed changes to Information Standards must be consulted on, so it is unlikely that any final announcement will be made on any new equality data information standards until the Winter of 2019/20.

**46. The CQC should expand the programme “Experts by Experience” to look at equalities issues and should include Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people who have the best knowledge of where unequal treatment may be taking place (Recommendation 23).**

47. The CQC is clear with inspectors and practices about what they expect to see in relation to patients wanting to be registered with no proof of identification or address. Key lines of enquiry, which form the basis of CQC inspections and judgements, make specific reference to services being delivered, made accessible and coordinated to take account of the needs of different people, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act and those in vulnerable circumstances. The CQC will continue working to improve how they inspect and consider how to improve its approach. In 2019/20, through

its Experts by Experience programme, the CQC will be piloting monitoring activity which will gather intelligence from seldom heard communities, which includes Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

**48. The new assessment of needs for CCG resource allocation should include an explicit section for CCGs to outline the needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in their local areas. This need should be taken into account by NHS England when it is allocating funding to CCGs (Recommendation 25).**

49. The Public Services (Social Value) Act came into force on 31 January 2013. It requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their local communities.

50. The new health inequalities challenge is how to prevent ill health developing in the first place and to improve life chances particularly for poorer and more disadvantaged groups, such as people who are homeless and rough sleepers, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, vulnerable migrants and sex workers; and groups with protected characteristics – Black and Minority Ethnic groups and people living in deprived areas.

51. NHS England will provide a range of support to local healthcare systems to help them meet their Long Term Plan health inequalities commitments.

52. This includes the development of a menu of evidence based interventions. NHS England is currently working with a range of stakeholders to develop the menu including Public Health England, Local Government Association, and Health and Wellbeing Alliance partners (which includes Friends, Family and Travellers who represent the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities).

53. The approach, content and evidence outlined in the menu will look to ensure that local healthcare systems effectively outline their key priorities with a focus on how they will narrow health inequalities over the next 5 years, with specific targets on specific groups including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people living in the most deprived areas, Black and Minority Ethnic groups and other protected groups.

54. NHS England is developing health inequalities learning resources which support the Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to address health inequalities. Part of this work will be linked to the menu of evidence based interventions and through joint working with Public Health England and the development of its Health Inequalities Joint Strategic Framework

55. DHSC recognise that the reduction of health inequalities is an important issue and the evidence shows that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities face significant challenges.

56. The allocation of resources by NHS England includes an adjustment to ensure CCGs have the resources to support those most challenged by health inequalities. Although the allocations issued by NHS England are not earmarked for any particular service, or group of service users, the health inequalities adjustment may be used to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, among others. The adjustment is based on local mortality rates, adjusted for the local age distribution. This is an indicator of the general health of the local population.

57. The NHS Long Term Plan commissioned the Advisory Committee of Resource Allocations (ACRA) to review the existing health inequalities adjustment; they will need to consider a range of issues such as how the adjustment to allocations is used to meet objectives in this area, including the issues raised in relation to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

58. NHS England is working with the national programme to ensure screening and vaccination programmes are designed to support a narrowing of health inequalities and to ensure the focus on inclusion health groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities is embedded in all the work areas.

59. One of the 7 service specifications on tackling neighbourhood inequalities will aim to test bed cluster PCNs with high levels of inequalities, where DHSC are working to influence the focus on inclusion health groups and people living in deprived areas.

**60. Maternity and antenatal care provide an opportunity for healthcare staff to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women. NHS England should consider training maternity staff and pre-natal staff to enquire about, signpost and refer to services that may also be beneficial to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women, including immunisation, dental services, mental health services and sexual health checks (Recommendation 27).**

61. Midwives and health visitors have a central role in supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families. Health visitors, as leaders of the Healthy Child Programme (HCP), can support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families to make informed decisions about health choices, including immunisations, whilst also encouraging families to register with a General Practitioner and dentist.

62. The limited information on the oral health of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families suggests that there are higher oral health needs in these communities. Health visitor and midwifery services have a key role in signposting to dental services.

63. Health visitor and midwifery services are universal and, as such, work alongside each other to reduce health inequalities in all ethnic groups and to ensure that every contact counts with those that they care for. Services are offered in various locations nationwide at times that are convenient and accessible to all families, usually the family home. DHSC know that in the general population, there is a high level of trust in healthcare professionals and it is possible that this is mirrored where they want health visitors to develop strong relationships with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

64. Health literacy is a priority area for health visiting and as such, is an overarching priority for healthcare professionals. Improving health literacy in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community means people can readily access and navigate through health care services provision which enables them to make informed choices about their health.

65. Certain vaccines, such as maternal pertussis and influenza, are offered to pregnant women through maternity services to offer protection to the mother and/or the child. Improving access to maternity services for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families is likely to have a positive impact on immunisation uptake for those maternity delivered vaccines.

66. The NHS Long Term Plan sets out actions that maternity services will take to help drive down health inequalities. NHS England will implement an enhanced and targeted continuity of carer model to help improve outcomes for the most vulnerable mothers and babies. By 2024, 75% of women from Black and Minority Ethnic communities and a similar percentage of women from the most deprived groups will receive continuity of care from their midwife throughout pregnancy, labour and the postnatal period. This will help reduce pre-term births, hospital admissions, the need for intervention during labour, and women's experience of care. Women from the most deprived communities are 12 times more likely to smoke during pregnancy than women from more affluent areas. In addition to the enhanced midwife model, DHSC will offer all women who smoke during their pregnancy specialist smoking cessation support to help them quit.

**67. Local authorities should inspect every existing private Traveller site in their area to map which have access to a minimum standard of basic amenities and which do not. For those that do not, local authorities should place conditions upon the license to ensure that these measures are put in place or consider revoking licenses that do not comply with these conditions. This solution does not address the problem that arises when it is the local authority itself that owns the site. For this, we recommend that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government explore methods by which local authorities can be held to account for their own sites (Recommendation 29).**

68. Local authorities should already carry out appropriate inspections of licenced residential mobile homes sites in accordance with their local enforcement policy. Local authorities can prosecute site operators who do not comply when issued with a compliance notice. If convicted, and if the site operator has two previous relevant convictions, local authorities may apply to a court for the site licence to be revoked. In addition, local authorities have the power to take emergency action, carry out works in default and recover expenses.

69. Local authorities are responsible for safeguarding the interests of residential mobile home occupants and the public through the licensing regime under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, as amended by the Mobile Homes Act 2013. All caravan sites in England with the relevant planning permission (relevant protected sites), must have a site licence issued by the local authority. Relevant protected sites include owner occupied Gypsy and traveller sites and rented Gypsy and traveller sites. The Mobile Homes Act 2013 introduced a new site licensing regime to give local authorities more effective control of the conditions on relevant protected sites by providing tools to monitor and take enforcement action. Local authorities can attach conditions to a licence before it is issued and can vary or amend the licence conditions after a licence has been issued. Site licence conditions may cover the number of caravans on a site, provision of roads, utilities, sewerage, fire equipment and spacing distances between homes.

70. MHCLG have set out their expectation that local authorities conduct regular, programmed, monitoring inspections, as part of their licensing function in best practice guidance: [“Mobile Homes Act 2013 A Best Practice Guide for Local Authorities on Enforcement of the New Site Licensing Regime.”](#) Inspections can help site operators to understand their responsibilities, detecting and resolving potential problems at an early stage through proactive, informal discussions. A local authority may charge for the

administration of its licensing scheme and MHCLG have published guidance on setting licence fees and developing a fees policy to help local authorities secure funds to operate its scheme.

71. A site licence holder who fails to comply with a site licence condition can be served with a compliance notice by the local authority. If they fail to comply with the notice, the licence holder can be prosecuted and, on conviction, can face an unlimited fine. If convicted on two or more occasions the local authority may apply to the court for revocation of the site licence.

72. Local authorities also have powers to enter a site in an emergency and carry out works in default if it considers there is an imminent risk to the health and safety of residents. The authority will in any of these cases be able to recover all its enforcement costs including court costs (and charge interest on the expenses claimed) from the site owner.

73. As noted above, housing and accommodation will be an important strand of the MHCLG-led strategy. As part of this, MHCLG will consider whether there are gaps around sanitation with regard to local authority-managed sites.

## Section 6: Roma

**74. The historical approach that the UK Government has taken to the EU Roma Framework is lacking in focus and has yielded little to no positive outcomes for Roma communities. The pilot projects being run through the Controlling Migration Fund are a welcome development. However, the Government must properly evaluate all the pilots and explicitly state how each successful project will be rolled out. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government should produce a full final report of all the projects and include clear decisions on which pilots were unsuccessful and should end and which were successful. The Ministry should commit to implementing any successful projects nationally (Recommendation 31).**

75. Projects funded through the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) are not 'pilot' projects but short-term projects in their own right. As part of the evaluation process, local authorities are required to complete impact summaries for each project that they run. These will be collected by MHCLG six months after the end date of each project.

76. In addition to the individual impact summaries, MHCLG have contracted an external evaluation of a cross section of projects, some of which included support for Roma communities. MHCLG intend to make this evaluation publicly available.

77. The MHCLG element of the CMF is directed from the bottom-up, with local authorities submitting proposals for funding in response to the prospectus, to ease pressures on services and benefit local residents. Migration pressures differ in different areas of England. For this reason, a localised approach is most appropriate, rather than rolling out local models nationally.

**78. All Local authorities that have Roma populations should consider the use of selective licensing to prevent exploitation in the private rented sector (Recommendation 34).**

79. Local authorities have powers under the Housing Act 2004 to introduce selective licensing of privately rented homes in their area. When a selective licensing designation is made it applies to most privately rented properties in the designated area. However, a designation can only be made in areas experiencing one or more specific problems. These are: low housing demand, significant anti-social behaviour, high crime, high migration, poor property conditions or high level of deprivation. There are currently no grounds for a local authority to designate an area based on demographics or risk of exploitation. The decision on whether to seek a selective licensing designation should be taken locally. However, Government does not believe selective licensing is appropriate as a local authority response in isolation or based solely on the ethnicity of an area's population.

80. Before making a selective licensing designation the local authority must identify the problems the area is experiencing and consider the impact of licensing on those. It must show it has considered alternative measures to tackle the problem and demonstrate how licensing, alongside other measures, will help to tackle the problems. In addition, authorities must consult widely with local residents and businesses, landlords and tenants on its proposals and the reasons for introducing selective licensing in the designated area.

**81. The Government should therefore ensure that Roma children arriving from outside the UK are identified quickly and ensure that the Pupil Premium reaches the school no more than one school term after a child has registered (Recommendation 36).**

82. DfE recognise that newly arriving pupils in schools may need prompt support. For this reason, DfE give schools complete freedom in the use of their pupil premium grant. This extra funding, worth £2.4 billion a year, enables schools to meet the changing needs of their disadvantaged pupils throughout the year, including all Gypsy Roma Travellers. As the pupil premium is part of core school funding, allocated yearly on the basis of the schools census rather than a personal budget for individual pupils, there is no mechanism to allocate it for single pupils who join a school during the year. Schools know their pupils best and make appropriate arrangements for their welfare and academic achievement.

**83. Schools have responsibilities to support and educate young Roma people. Internal and informal exclusions of Roma children should not be used as a mechanism to improve exclusion rates. Ofsted should actively inspect schools for signs of Roma students being internally or informally excluded (Recommendation 37).**

84. Ofsted have sent a separate response to the Committee for this recommendation (See Annex A).

## **Section 7: Discrimination**

**85. We recommend that senior leaders in all public service bodies be trained in the Public Sector Equality Duty and that each body have a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller "champion", similar to the role that exists in the National Police Chiefs Council (Recommendation 41).**

86. The Government agrees that Public authorities should be aware of their obligations under the Equality Act and leaders within these organisations have a responsibility to ensure staff are aware of the Public Sector Equality Duty and comply with it in the discharge of its functions. We agree that training can play an essential role in this area.

**87. It is regrettable that many in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities feel that discrimination is inevitable, and they must tolerate it. The Government should work with community organisations to train Gypsy, Roma and Traveller individuals to understand their rights, identify discrimination and to give them the tools to take legal action to challenge discrimination (Recommendation 42).**

88. The Government is clear that discrimination is unacceptable in all its forms and we recognise the continued vulnerability of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

89. Discrimination and negative stereotypes must be tackled from early years onwards. That is why MHCLG have funded a pilot project in Liverpool to challenge expectations schools may have of the ability and progress of Roma students. This project seeks to improve educational attainment for Roma communities so young Roma people see the importance of education for themselves. Through the Controlling Migration Fund, MHCLG also fund a project in Kent providing targeted support to the Roma community to improve access to NHS services. In addition, MHCLG fund projects which engage with marginalised communities, including Roma, in Sheffield, Gravesham and Medway.

**90. The Home Office should work with GATE Herts, with a view to creating more physical reporting sites, and should train community organisations to encourage Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people to report hate crime when it occurs (Recommendation 45).**

91. The Government recognises that there are various barriers to the reporting of hate crime. That is why in our Hate Crime Action Plan refresh, published in October 2018, we committed to supporting improvements to reporting and recording processes. MHCLG will continue to work with GATE Herts to increase awareness, build confidence to report and improve accessibility.

92. MHCLG funding to GATE Herts delivers a number of initiatives, including the roll-out of regional caseworkers and a network of hate crime ambassadors. They will work with partner organisations to drive up the reporting of hate crime within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, and support victims.

## **Section 8: Violence Against Women and Girls**

93. The Government is respectful of the cultural heritage of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. However, we are clear that we will not tolerate cultural practices which endorse or encourage violence and abuse, both physical and emotional, against women and girls.

**94. Local authorities should ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women have access to a single, trusted contact who provides them with the information and support they need. Should this contact be from a charitable organisation, local authorities must ensure that the organisation has sufficient funding to sustain the necessary support (Recommendation 47).**

95. Domestic abuse is a devastating crime which shatters the lives of victims and their children. Abuse in the home can impact on children's long term health and behaviour. The Government is committed to supporting all victims of domestic abuse. We know how important high quality support is to helping victims and their children to recover from the trauma of abuse and regain their independence. All victims of domestic abuse need to be able to access the support they need, when they need it, which can include trusted keyworkers.

96. Local authorities are responsible for making local spending decisions based on local need. MHCLG published Priorities for Domestic Abuse Services in November 2016 and updated these in July 2018. Harnessing learning from local authorities and domestic abuse sector partners, these set out expectations of what local areas should be putting into place to ensure their response is as collaborative, robust and effective as it can be. The Priorities are clear that local areas should respond to the needs of all domestic abuse victims and MHCLG expect local authorities to commission services that respond to the needs of diverse groups, including those from isolated and marginalised communities. The Government has provided support to help local commissioners who were successful in bidding for a share of funding from the 2018–20 £22m Fund for supporting victims of domestic abuse to fulfil these expectations.

97. MHCLG have also carried out a review of how domestic abuse services are locally commissioned and funded across England, working closely with sector partners, drawing on their data, expertise and knowledge, as the review was conducted. Following the review, MHCLG intend to consult on potential measures for sustainable delivery of support for victims, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller victims and their children, in accommodation-based services for domestic abuse across England shortly.

**98. A lack of awareness of consent culture and healthy relationships is leading to domestic abuse in young Gypsy and Traveller people's lives. Both boys and girls need to be taught what abuse is and how to challenge it. All primary schools in England should ensure that they have lessons on consent and respect included in relationship education and these messages should continue through into secondary school. Gypsy and Traveller organisations should be among groups involved in the development of these classes and could, where appropriate, deliver the lessons (Recommendation 48).**

99. The Government wants to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe. That is why DfE are making Relationships Education compulsory for all primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory for all secondary pupils from September 2020. The aim is to put in place the building blocks needed for positive and safe relationships of all kinds, starting with the family and friends, and moving out to other kinds of relationships, including online.

100. In Relationships Education, children should be taught the importance of taking turns, permission-seeking, and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults; which will provide the building blocks for covering the concept of consent in secondary. In secondary, pupils should be taught how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn both online and in other contexts. Pupils should then be taught the key aspects of the law relating to sex and relationships. This should include the age of consent, what consent is and is not, the definitions and recognition of rape, sexual assault and harassment.

101. As with other aspects of the curriculum, schools will have flexibility over how they deliver these subjects. It is down to schools to decide what resources they use to support the delivery of these subjects; however, DfE expect schools to assess resources carefully, ensuring that they are appropriate and sensitive to the needs of their pupils.

102. We have heard of effective work that community organisations are doing working with Gypsy and Traveller men and women to challenge outdated attitudes towards women. The Home Office should work with these organisations with a view to funding similar programmes across the country (Recommendation 49).

103. Government will continue to engage with organisations which work with Gypsy and Traveller men and women about these issues. For example, through the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller liaison group co-ordinated by MHCLG and attended by officials from across Government. This group provides an opportunity for Government to seek the views and actions from a range of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller organisations on particular policy issues.

## Appendix 2: Ofsted Response

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**Recommendation 16: Schools should, as part of their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty, be challenging race and gender stereotypes wherever they encounter them. Ofsted should ensure that inspectors are actively inspecting schools for gender and racial stereotyping or signs of sexism or racism from either pupils or staff.**

### **Ofsted Response:**

Ofsted always look at how schools deal with discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour.

As the Committee's report points out, schools have duties under the Equality Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not. Ofsted inspectors consider schools' compliance with these Equality Act duties (and relevant guidance) when carrying out inspections, as required by our own duties under the Equality Act.<sup>1</sup>

On all inspections, inspectors will ask schools for the records they hold on bullying, discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour. That will include racist and sexist bullying, use of derogatory language and racist incidents. We will also ask pupils about their experiences of discriminatory and prejudiced behaviour, and, where schools are failing to meet their duties, it will have an impact on the leadership and management judgement.

**Recommendation 19: Schools have a duty to proactively plan for how they will have conversations with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents about what relationship and sex education involves and what parents' options are for their children, short of removing them from school. These plans should be explicit and Ofsted should take them into account during inspections and assess schools accordingly.**

### **Ofsted Response:**

Ofsted will always take account of what work a school has done to tailor their curriculum to the needs of their pupils.

The committee will be aware of the Department for Education's new Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum that schools will be able to teach from 2019 and must teach from 2020. Schools need to decide for themselves what an appropriate way to address these issues is in their school. That will need to take account of the needs of pupils in that school, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, among others.

Where a school is failing to meet its obligations, inspectors will consider this when reaching the personal development judgement.

**Recommendation 37: Schools have responsibilities to support and educate young Roma people. Internal and informal exclusions of Roma children should not be used as a mechanism to improve exclusion rates. Ofsted should actively inspect schools for signs of Roma students being internally or informally excluded.**

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<sup>1</sup> HM Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills v Interim Executive Board of Al-Hijrah School (Secretary of State for Education and others intervening) [2017] EWCA Civ 1426

**Ofsted Response:**

Ofsted will always look for signs that any pupil has been off-rolled<sup>2</sup>

Ofsted is clear that schools should have an inclusive culture where the needs of pupils are met and identified to ensure they engage positively with the curriculum, have a positive experience of learning and achieve positive outcomes. Used correctly, exclusion is a useful measure for headteachers, but any exclusion of a pupil must be legal and justified, and permanent exclusions should only be used as a last resort. Schools should have a strategy for reintegrating a pupil who returns to school following a fixed-period exclusion and for managing their future behaviour.

Ofsted will request schools to provide, prior to starting any school inspection, records and analysis of exclusions, pupils taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour and any use of internal isolation. As such inspectors will always consider any signs of internal and informal exclusion, as well as formal and permanent exclusion. Where inspectors find evidence of any form of off-rolling taking place, it will be addressed in the inspection report, and (depending on scale and impact) in their leadership and management judgement.

Ofsted has expressed concern about off-rolling in its latest annual report.<sup>3</sup> Our proposed new inspection framework will allow us to better identify and report on those schools that might be off-rolling.

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2 The practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil. Off-rolling in these circumstances is a form of 'gaming'.

3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201718-education-childrens-services-and-skills>