

## London Gypsy and Traveller Forum Minutes

3 December 2015

Venue:

Esmee Fairburn, Kings Cross, London

### **Attendance**

Mark Haythorne- Surrey CC, Rose Palmer- RB Kensington and Chelsea, Hilda Brazil – Surry CC, Marin Mahoney- Old Willow Close, Lisa Bottergy – Old Willow Close, Mike Doherty – Traveller Times, Guido Borasino – UCL, Sittha Kruarat – UCL, Delilah Zhou – UCL, Brian Foster – Traveller Education, Billy Smith - Student, Clemmie James- LGTU, Ilinca Diaconescu- LGTU, Debby Kennett- LGTU, Abigail Angus – Traveller Movement, Billie Jo Sines – Ash Manor School, Jo Luhman – Ash Manor School, Ruby Brazil – Student, Mary- Lou Searle – Student, David Landau - Redbridge

### **Chaired by**

Tracie Giles, LGTU

### **Apologies**

Diane Faichney, Ridge Michael, Cllr Carpenter, Lindsey Chatralia, Sherrie Smith, Sue Mutter

### **Minutes from last meeting**

Minutes from September 2015 were agreed.

#### **1. Gypsy Skills Project and Ash Manor School Presentation by Mark Haythorne, Project Officer for Brighter Futures for Gypsy Roma Travellers**

Mark showed excerpts from a short film produced by young people attending the Gypsy Skills project and presented some key issues:

- Gypsy Skills ran 2007 - 15 as partnership (community development) approach to alternative education provision for those G/T young people that were disengaged from education and had no other realistic route back
- 50/50 curriculum - Functional Skills (Eng and maths) and vocational training (construction, hairdressing, cooking)
- Worked with 75% attendance (about average for G/T), exam passes mainly Entry Level 3 - Level 1, Hair NVQ 1, BTEC L2 in construction and home cooking
- Nearly all full-time students gained college places
- Separate provision reflected what the families/students wanted, and this was never a long term solution. It did however give 100+ young people some education where there would have been none, and helped to pave the way for change - hopefully on all sides

## **Ash Manor School Presentation**

- Largest number of Traveller children in education in the country
- Traveller attendance is better than the national average and better achievements at GCSE level
- They have a Gypsy and Traveller liaison worker and buy in vocational training courses
- There is no specific funding for literacy so they use money from the pupil premium. Due to the pupil premium being means tested by free school meals. Many Gypsy and Traveller children are not recognised as disadvantaged. Not all schools have the ability to use funding more flexibly to meet the needs of Traveller children.
- One of the main problems is that some parents don't want to keep their children in school after age 13-14

### **2. Evidence and Research on Gypsy and Traveller Education Presentation by UCL Students**

- The presentation provided data and statistics on attendance and attainment for Gypsy and Traveller pupils in primary and secondary education and identified some key factors influencing poor outcomes.

**ACTION:** Presentation will be circulated.

### **3. Research on school exclusions – Traveller Movement**

- Presented data on school exclusions from the last 5 years for each local authority in the country. The results are varied, in some areas Gypsy and Traveller pupils are doing very well, in others they are more likely to be excluded than other groups.

**ACTION:** Research will be circulated when completed.

### **4. What it means to do well – LGTU**

- Clemmie introduced a film a pilot film made by LGTU to begin a conversation within the community in east London about attitudes towards education.

### **5. Discussion and issues explored.**

- Difficulty of keeping children with special needs through the education system and often having to take them out from school into privately paid home education due to lack of support.
- Home education needs to be closely scrutinised; many parents use this as a way around the system. Education officers usually do only 1-2 home visits/year which is not sufficient. There needs to be the right kind of support for parents choosing this route.
- The Badman Review 2009 recommends support for parents choosing home education
- Dale Farm there was a lot of resistance to the evictions and relocation because parents wanted to keep their children in school in that area
- Recognised that there were a number of factors leading to under achievement in the Gypsy and Traveller community.

## 6. **Jeanette Arnold AM – London Assembly Education Panel**

- Between 2000-2008 equality was a main pillar of the previous Mayor's strategies and policies, but this has changed under the current Mayor and is not the case.
- In the next 5 years the aim is to only have academies and free schools in London which run like independent businesses.
- In the current Mayor's education programme focuses on London School Excellence programme where most of the funding goes to the best schools. Instead funding should go to the schools with lower outcomes, because they will be in areas with disadvantaged communities.
- Recommendations for the Forum's campaign for 2016: Mayor to move away from focus only on excellence and focus on those most in need.
- GLA to find out which schools have most Gypsy and Traveller pupils and work together with those boroughs who still have some influence over the schools
- Home schooling can be a solution if it's done in a co-operative way (a few families getting together to access better resources); can seek Mayor's support to identify sites and funding for such co-operative schools
- If the Mayor promises something and does not deliver this can be challenged in the courts using human rights and equality legislation. The London Assembly also has a role to check the gaps in Mayor's delivery on commitments.

**ACTION:** For the Forum to ask the Mayor to recognise that Gypsies and Travellers are a disadvantaged group and should benefit from the school premium? Could the Education Panel do an investigation into some of these issues?

**ACTION:** For the Forum to show the 2016 candidates the key statistics about Gypsy and Traveller attainment and attendance and ask what they will do to address these poor outcomes.

**ACTION:** Invite the mayoral candidates 2016 to the March Forum and present the collaborative Gypsy and Traveller manifesto

**ACTION:** For LGTU to send out draft manifesto to Forum members and receive feedback and amendment and make changes. For LGTU to create an official Manifesto to be presented to Mayoral candidates.

## 7. **Presentation of update about Housing and Planning Bill with regards to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – LGTU**

- Parliamentary process and current stage of committee debates – Report stage 5<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016
- Deadline for submissions for evidence 10 December 2015
- We STILL Count campaign Facebook page can be used to submit comments

## 8. **AOB**

- David – asked for information on potentially illegal eviction of a group of Travellers in Ilford
- Debby – announced Leeds GATE event on negotiated stopping places