

London Gypsy and Traveller Forum

13 July 2017, Esmee Fairbairn

MINUTES

Attending: Bridget McDonagh; Cassie McDonagh – Traveller Movement; Cllr Christopher Kennedy – Hackney Council; Eddie Gilmore – Irish Chaplaincy; Elizabeth Goldrick – Paddington Trust; Ellie Mahoney; Geraldine Lindsey – LGT; Harriet Ballance – STAG; Holly-Gale Millette – LGT Trustee; Ilinca Diaconescu – LGT; Iman Achara – Partners in Integration Network; Ivy Manning – FFT; Jenni Berlin – Traveller Movement; Kelly O’Driscoll; Kinga Ciuran; Laszlo Balla ;Lilly Collins; Liz McPherson – FFT; Louise Francis – Mapping for Change; Maria Alonson – Mapping for Change; Marian Mahoney – LGT Trustee; Mark Blake – BTEG; Martina Mongan; Mena Mongan; Mike Doherty – Travellers Times; Rose Palmer – RB Kensington and Chelsea; Tracie Giles – LGT; Winnie McDonagh

Chair: Tracie Giles

1. Introductions

2. Minutes from last meeting 9 February 2017 – agreed

3. Setting the scene – Skills for all Londoners and other initiatives from the Mayor of London

Ilinca gave a brief presentation on:

- the London Gypsy and Traveller manifesto demands on skills and training
- the a range of strategies and proposals from the GLA, including: Skills for Londoners, the London Economic Development Strategy and Skills Strategy, the Good Work Standard and GLA Responsible Procurement Policy, Good Growth Fund
- challenges for Gypsies and Travellers accessing these opportunities

Q&A:

- Could we poll our community ahead of the consultation strategies to find out more about opportunities, aspirations and challenges?
- Could a percentage of the funds be ring-fenced for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities?
- Could work-placements for the community be arranged?
- Could a percentage of the tendering of goods and services used by the Mayor’s offices be offered to businesses run by Gypsies and Travellers

4. Experiences of training – contributions from training providers and community members

Mark Blake – Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG)

- Challenges in terms of race equality
- BTEG is part of a consortium of 6 organisations seeking to support young Black men into employment; they are 2 years into the project but not meeting employment targets
- The experience of working with employers has been very difficult, as the Public Sector Equality Duty doesn't apply and it's very hard to engage them in workshops and events
- The Mayor needs to be much firmer in his message to employers
- Responses to gender inequality are very different to those on race inequality

Geraldine Lindsey – London Gypsies and Travellers (LGT)

- Impacts of welfare reform and many services going online – many people in the Gypsy and Traveller community have been penalised
- LGT has set up a course for IT and literacy skills, but also other practical skills like hair&beauty, sewing, floristry
- Difficult to engage young men and men
- Challenges for community members in relation to getting into work, mainly due to discrimination and skills gap
- LGT also supports people to become self-employed

Kinga Ciuran

- Member of Polish Roma community
- Difficulties in accessing education and work due to cultural barriers, prejudice etc
- Inspired by Traveller women taking the LGT computer training to set up a weekly class for Roma women; after the first year 3 girls had found jobs and passed the Life in the UK (citizenship) test, as well as driving tests

Mena Mongan – LGT

- One of the first to go to the IT course; she is now working in the LGT office as a receptionist
- Loves what she does and the opportunity to speak up for Travellers and put herself up for campaigns

5. Discussion

- in Tower Hamlets the Traveller site was under threat; community members got trained in computer skills and residents group organising and campaigned to save the site
- need to develop training and support for **young men**; some negative experiences with accessing **apprenticeships** in construction in Hackney, which terminated before term and left young men without the work experience or chance to get paid employment; need longer term apprenticeships in areas relevant to the community with secure opportunities for employment
- need more relevant **vocational courses in schools** that appeal to young Gypsies and Travellers; challenge for those who don't have English and Math GCSEs; there are different levels of support in different colleges
- focus **on self-employment** – support Gypsy and Traveller entrepreneurs to build on their own traditional skills and modernise them
- need to combat **discrimination** and support Gypsies and Travellers with legal training and accessing trade unions
- **Career counsellors** in colleges and schools need to match opportunities to the ability skills and aspirations of Gypsy and Traveller young people
- Friends, Families and Travellers have a project seeking to find out what local work opportunities there are (tree surgery, IT, film making) and **matching young people with mentors** and potential employers; YMCA offers a mentorship scheme and are currently supporting a young man who wants to study music, liaising with recording studios
- The Mayor could play an important role in setting up mentor matching schemes, but also supporting sole traders to take on apprentices
- How to support Gypsy and Traveller sole traders and family businesses to **get contracts with local authorities** in tree cutting, cleaning etc? Need support with setting up businesses and tax advice; the GLA is a large employer and contractor, they need to **support small businesses** in supply chains and open up the process
- Opportunity to connect young people with **nursery and care** roles at Busy Bees
- Challenges for people with **a criminal record**; this is a deterrent for many people; there are lots of examples of people going into roles where their criminal records shouldn't be checked but this still happens because of racial profiling; the system needs to be changed but also there needs to be support for people to build their confidence

6. Gathering evidence – Mapping the Pathway to Equality

- ID introduced the mapping project carried out in partnership with Mapping for Change: to gather evidence about the Gypsy and Traveller community across London and show their contributions but also experiences of inequality and discrimination
- Louise Francis (Mapping for Change) – gave a presentation on community based mapping;
 - as part of the project they are developing an online map as a resource for community members and other stakeholders to share information about existing services and experiences of using them;
 - this will enable community members to contribute with information, photos, recordings and start conversations;
 - one of the aims is for service providers and local authorities to start improving their offer to Gypsy and Traveller communities

Q&A:

- Needs to represent community voices and views on specific categories
- Should be sent to government to inform them of what's happening on the ground
- Can be linked to social media to increase access
- It should include information about: venues for weddings, christenings, family events; holiday parks where Travellers face discrimination; police stations; but also lawyers who work with the community, businesses, one stop shops