

**Report of the Post Primary & Youth
Subgroup**

to the

Taskforce for Traveller Education

26th April 2010

Post Primary & Youth Subgroup Report

CONTEXT

At a meeting on 24th February 2010 in Dungannon Multi Purpose Centre members of the Post Primary and Youth Taskforce subgroup agreed to hold a residential to take forward their work. The aim of the residential was to provide an opportunity for subgroup members to address issues, review papers and existing good practice and to make recommendations to the Taskforce with a view to informing future provision.

The residential was held on 14-15 April 2010. In attendance were the following:

Jim Maye (Chairperson, SELB)
Eugene Douglas (Subgroup Secretary, SELB)
John McGoran (DE)
David Lewers (NEELB)
Peter Corr (SEELB)
Gerard Doran (SELB/WELB Youth Service)
Paula Smyth (SELB)
Emer Ewing (St Gerard's Education Resource Centre, Belfast)
Cate Magee (Principal, St Patrick's College, Ballymena)
Oliver Mooney (Principal, St Paul's High School, Bessbrook)
P. J. Campbell (Principal, St Joseph's College, Coalisland)
Margaret Boyle (Derry Travellers Support Group)
Kathleen Sheridan (Crushan Munia)
Barbara Fitzgerald (Crushan Munia)

Apologies were received from:

Cathy Galway (Youth & Community Relations Branch, DE)
Pamela Larmour (CCEA)
Oliver McKearney (Youth & Community Relations Branch, DE)
Jacqueline Connolly (Armagh Traveller Support Group)
Rosie Mongan (An Munia Tober)
Marie Louise McAllister (An Munia Tober)

Day 1 of the residential began with consideration of the issues facing the Post Primary and Youth sectors (see Appendix J.) These were laid out in a number of presentations from members and in papers from those unable to attend. These are appended to this report (Appendices A- J).

ISSUES

A power point presentation (Appendix A) from **Sharon Lawlor** (Department of Education) outlined key facts from the School Census in relation to the Traveller community:

- Number of Traveller children at school (gender, FSM, type of residence etc)
- Geographical distribution of Traveller children
- Attendance rates
- Special Educational Needs
- Levels of attainment

Cate Magee (Principal, St Patrick's College, Ballymena) reported on consultations she had completed along with **Emer Ewing** (St Gerard's Education Resource Centre, Belfast) with Traveller children in post primary education. They identified a number of issues (Appendix B) in relation to:

- Transition
 - Need for link teachers and Traveller support teachers
 - 'Buddy' system
 - Educational visits / events
- Engagement
 - Curricular relevance
 - Low self esteem
 - qualifications
- Attendance
 - Key Stage 4 drop off
 - Better careers advice
 - More involvement of youth workers and voluntary workers in school

Oliver Mooney (Principal, St Paul's High School, Bessbrook) in his presentation (Appendix C) highlighted the need for:

- Dedicated Traveller support teachers
- Focused learning
- Targeted post primary courses to meet the needs of Traveller children
- Financial reward

P. J. Campbell (Principal, St Joseph's College, Coalisland) reported (Appendix D) on what his school is doing to provide a relevant education for Traveller children. Currently it has 46 Traveller children on role (11% of the school population). For his school the major issues were:

- Attendance, punctuality and getting out of school early
- Traveller children not completing their formal education
- Traveller traditions
- Parental involvement in education
- Curriculum
- Funding

He outlined the work being done by the school to tackle the issues:

- Literacy / Numeracy support
- Variations to the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- Financial support from SELB
- Parental involvement
- Working closely with EWO Service
- Integration of Traveller children into all aspects of school life

Margaret Boyle (Derry Travellers Support Group) highlighted issues (Appendix E) raised by Traveller parents in Derry:

- Bullying
- Lack of recognition of Traveller culture
- Parental attitudes to education

A paper (Appendix F) tabled from **Gerard Doran** (SELB/WELB Youth Service) and **Paula Smyth** (SELB Youth Service) raised the following issues:

- Lack of strategy to integrate youth work into possible interventions
- Difficulties securing “buy in” from travelling community e.g. indigenous leadership
- Low resource base/temporary or “targeted” funding difficulties
- Raising awareness of Traveller culture
- Mistrust between Traveller community and the settled community
- Gender issues
- Family economy
- Traveller lifestyle, including young marriage
- Lack of aspirational role models from the Traveller community

A paper (Appendix G) tabled from **Pamela Larmour** (CCEA, Research and Statistics) dealt with:

- Vocational and occupational qualifications on offer in Northern Ireland
- Alternative providers
- Employment opportunities and levels of unemployment in the Traveller community

John McGoran (Department of Education) reported on his consultation with young people from the Traveller community. Issues they raised included:

- Poor and sporadic attendance at school
- Curriculum relevance and school life
- Differing attitudes between boys and girls
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of Traveller culture
- Attitudes of Traveller parents to education

He also gave detailed statistics relating to the attendance and attainment of Traveller children (Appendix H)

FINDINGS

During the range of meetings and consultations conducted by the subgroup, **four key areas** seemed to be emerging:

- 1. Attendance of Traveller children at post primary schools and particularly at Key Stage 4 and beyond*
- 2. Appropriateness of the curriculum on offer to Traveller children in post primary schools*
- 3. Attainment levels of Traveller children*
- 4. Engaging Traveller parents and Youth in Post Primary education*

Two groups were formed to examine these areas in more depth through workshop discussions and a lengthy range of issues were identified (see Appendix I.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following further extensive discussion the two groups reached agreement on the **key issues** facing the Post Primary and Youth sectors and drew up a series of **recommendations** for the Taskforce to consider. The recommendations are in two broad categories (Post Primary and Youth) but by their nature are often connected and not seen as disjoint.

Recommendations for Youth

1 Research

By Sept 2011 Department of Education to commission research to identify the specific needs and benefits of the Youth Service for Traveller children in both formal and informal settings. This to include a baseline of current provision as well as an identification of best practice in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

2 Awareness Raising

Youth Service and school staff should share expertise and work together to be in a better position to meet the needs of Traveller children. This will involve joint training for workers from both sectors who will then provide joint training programmes for the Traveller children.

3 Increased Involvement

Following on from (2) there should be opportunities for increased involvement provided the following is adhered to

- Appropriate programmes are identified or developed
- Sustainable funding
- Staff receive training in Cultural Diversity
- Consideration should be given to the use of Peer Educators from the Traveller community

4 Development of a Traveller Youth Worker Forum

By September 2011 to consider the development of a Traveller Youth Worker Forum across Northern Ireland to share information and highlight good practice and acknowledge regional differences. It is envisaged that this Forum should meet on a quarterly basis and form an integral part of the Regional Traveller Service.

Recommendations for Post Primary Education

In Post Primary education there are a number of overarching themes that are “driving” the recommendations and the subgroup believe these to be **attendance, attainment, engagement and accreditation**. The Group believe there is a link between attendance and attainment and that link is the relevancy of the curriculum. There is clear evidence in some schools e.g. St Joseph’s College Coalisland and St Patrick’s College Ballymena that when there are meaningful adjustments to the curriculum the attendance of Traveller children improves significantly.

Apart from the above there is also the problem of *existing legislation* in Northern Ireland that allows Traveller children to attend only 100 days in a school year. This legislation needs to be appealed because it discriminates against the Traveller child’s right to an education on a level with its settled peers.

1 Transition Programmes

Use the Traveller Support Service and others to increase parental involvement in three key areas

- Years 7-8 (transition from primary to post primary school)
- Years 10-11 (transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4)
- Years 12 -13 (transition from Key Stage 4 to Further Education or the world of work)

Make greater use Traveller Support Groups, Traveller parents and school outreach staff.

2 Traveller Culture

By September 2011 could we have some mention of Traveller culture referred to within the KS3 Citizenship strand even as a possible exemplification in relation to equality, diversity or challenging stereotypes? Parties involved here would include CCEA with possible guidance from the Forum for the Education of Travellers' Children NI.

Signposting alone would not be sufficient. There is a requirement to identify, collate or develop quality learning materials and these should be made available to schools to teach all pupils about Traveller culture. Again this task could be undertaken with guidance from CCEA, the Traveller Support Groups, and the Forum for the Education of Travellers' Children NI. Training on Traveller culture should be planned, organised and delivered to relevant teachers and those training to be teachers. This could be organised through ELB CASS and Teacher Training Institutions.

3 An Appropriate Curriculum

More awareness about curriculum flexibility and resources

The subgroup would accept that the revised curriculum is appropriate for all children and provides the flexibility and scope for teachers to enable rich engagement with children, including Traveller children. However the subgroups recommendation here is that schools are not fully aware of the degree of flexibility – (nor current best practice-) and the resources that are currently available to them. A lot more needs to be done to ensure that this particular issue is addressed. The subgroup would like to see a curriculum which meets the identified needs of Traveller children. Travellers are not generally interested in academic subjects but for those who are that option should be available. Schools need to be more aware that there is more than one pathway to the labour market – not simply an *academic* one. There needs to be more consideration of appropriate *vocational* and *occupational* courses. The mode of delivery is also something schools need to reconsider. It does not always have to be “face to face” in a class room. It could be through the Youth Service, Training Services, Further Education or initiatives such as the ELAMP project.

By Sept 2011 schools should begin to put in place a range of courses at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, including “*taster courses*” or courses like *STEPS* to meet the needs of children from the Traveller community. There should be more choice for students and the option to pursue different but relevant educational pathways. This will involve schools collaborating with other schools and training organisations and may involve the following agencies. NGOs, DE, DEL, CASS, schools.

4 Accredited Programmes

The subgroup would accept that there are programmes within the current QCF and Entitlement Framework and these programmes are already accredited.

However there are a number of other providers who may or may not have accreditation as an integral part of their courses. The recommendation here is that there should be some method of investigation of other provisions outside the current arrangements to ensure that courses for Traveller children are viable and merit accreditation. This would apply both within post primary schools and programmes organised by the voluntary sector. By June 2012 accreditation should be in place for post primary Traveller students following alternate/ disappplied courses. CCEA should be able to give awards for alternate/ disappplied courses or vocational/occupational courses e.g. for hairdressing, leisure and tourism, joinery, bricklaying. These should be seen as valuable routes or pathways to employment.

Agencies involved here would include CCEA, DEL, DE.

5 Careers Advice Education and Guidance (CIEAG)

By September 2011 appropriate careers advice and guidance should be in place in post primary schools that takes account of “the world of work” of the Traveller community and the economy they work within. Children from the Traveller community should have the opportunity to participate in work experience programmes outside their own community and have access to formal advice and guidance from the career service. Who will be involved in this? DEL, DE, ETI, Career Service for Northern Ireland, ELB CASS staff, and Career teachers. Consideration should also be given to inviting role models from the Traveller Community to assist schools in the above.

Finally

Schools cannot meet the needs of Traveller children by themselves but there will be improved outcomes for all if Youth and Post Primary work together.

Post Primary & Youth Recommendations

YOUTH

1. Research
2. Awareness Raising
3. Increased Involvement
4. Development of a
Traveller Youth Worker
Forum

POST PRIMARY

1. Transition Programmes
2. Traveller Culture
3. An Appropriate Curriculum
4. Accredited Programmes
5. Careers Advice & Guidance

Report from St Patrick's College, Ballymena
to Taskforce Post Primary & Youth Subgroup

TRANSITION

- More information available in Year 8 regarding Traveller culture – possibly through Pastoral Care classes
- Celebration of Traveller culture possibly bringing in people who could demonstrate traditional crafts. This type of event might help Year 8 Travellers to settle into school
- Possibility of Day Trips e.g. Appleby Horse Fair
- The pupils enjoy school trips and treats. Planned trips, i.e. Christmas shows, would encourage pupils to attend
- Traveller literature available in school classrooms
- Polish language classes for all Year 8 children – might help all young people to understand each other's culture
- Special Needs children placed in small classes
- Need for more male teachers as role models especially for Traveller boys
- Link Teacher – this person is seen as both central and crucial to ensuring a smooth transition from Primary to Post Primary – She / he understands children's needs and is able to ensure these are planned for and addressed.
- The post primary Traveller support teacher should visit ALL Belfast Primary schools in May/June, with the Traveller EWO to have a familiar face on arrival in September
(Time constraints may make this difficult to implement)
- Welcoming remarks, by Principals and form teachers to all ethnic minority pupils, would be encouraging
- Early and frequent visits by Traveller support teacher to year 8 pupils would be helpful
- 'Buddy' system, by 2nd / 3rd year pupils has been helpful
- The pupils enjoy school trips and treats. Planned trips, i.e. Christmas shows, would encourage pupils to attend

Report from St Patrick's College, Ballymena
to Taskforce Post Primary & Youth Subgroup

ENGAGEMENT

- Pupils should be allowed to 'drop' subjects which are perceived to be of no value or use in terms of long term vocational needs
- Need for more "hands on" classes – car mechanics, woodwork etc.
- Two days at the local Regional College is seen to be more beneficial rather than only one as at present
- Traditional crafts could be taught in after school classes
- Some traveller pupils are reluctant to draw attention to themselves, by taking part in school drama productions. They feel that their accents identify them. They do use homework clubs and enjoy sports and cookery clubs. Transport home, can be a problem, if they travel by taxi.
- Traveller children lack confidence / low self esteem. Must be made to believe in themselves
- There is a lot of prejudice "out there" – felt that this contributes to a lack of engagement – "What's the point? We'll not get a job anyway" etc
- All Travellers need something extra as it is "harder for them"
- Qualifications regarded as being very important - all subjects studied should lead to formal qualifications
- After school activities e.g.
 - Drama Club
 - Book Club
 - Art & Crafts Club
- Parents of Year 8 pupils feel that their children enjoy most subjects. When pupils progress to years 9 and 10, they have difficulty with Science, Foreign languages and find it difficult to complete home-works and do research for coursework

Report from St Patrick's College, Ballymena
to Taskforce Post Primary & Youth Subgroup

ATTENDANCE

More of a problem in Years 11 and 12.

- Options are often seen as a “turn off”. More flexibility needed at this key time.
- Questionnaire for Traveller children in Year 10 to establish likes / dislikes regarding subject choices
- Better careers advice based on skills / interest
- More opportunity for voluntary work in Youth Club / Parish etc.
- Need to promote an interest in after school classes – crafts, fishing, horse care etc which are linked to Traveller culture.
- Traveller parents feel that their children should attend all family events. They consider this a very important part of their family life
- Parents feel that education and schooling are more suitable for girls than for boys. The boys should be learning their trade from their fathers, uncles and cousins

Report from St Patrick's College, Ballymena
to Taskforce Post Primary & Youth Subgroup

ATTAINMENT

- Welcome opportunity to meet with teachers at Parent / Teacher meetings – very valuable, although not always possible due to other commitments – younger siblings, grandchildren to look after or transport may be a problem
- Ambitious for children, but want the courses on offer to be more meaningful and relevant, leading to recognised qualification.
- Some would be happy to meet with one teacher, i.e., Form teacher and have the school report explained in private
- Not sure about staying at school until pupils were 16. Some parents still feel that there is little point in being at school after 16

RETENTION

- Consider basic numeracy and literacy 'core' programmes, with certificates on completion, i.e. A.Q.A. more beneficial
- Start vocational courses in year 10
- Buy traveller publications and contribute to them
- Welcome nomadic Travellers into school community
- Educate all staff on History and culture of Traveller culture and lifestyle, and foster mutual respect

Report from St Patrick's College, Ballymena
to Taskforce Post Primary & Youth Subgroup

AOB

- Need for something in the community to get all Traveller children together –
 - Events
 - Outings
 - Literacy/numeracy classes for those who “missed out” when at school

- Some concession needs to be made regarding Physical Education.
Participation should be less dependant on proper kit etc.

- Sport generally seen as something which is good – encourages integration

St Paul's High School, Bessbrook

Traveller Task Force Suggestions

Meeting on Friday, March 26th 2010, Antrim Board Centre.

- 1 Dedicated teacher to engage, monitor, support and signpost.
- 2 Target vocational options for year 11 and 12.
Consider where these would run. School not perceived as “best place.”
Alternative provision, providers and location as currently operates for some pupils.
Subjects mentioned; Carpet, Upholstery,
Weaving, Gardening, Landscaping, Horticulture.
- 3 Financial reward for attending, similar to EMA scheme. Positive discrimination for traveller youth as other 14-16 year olds wouldn't be eligible.
- 4 Focussed learning in reading and writing, cultural awareness, numeracy.

The above suggestions arose out of conversations with Sean Monaghan, EWO, Newry area, SELB, who liaised with traveller adults and students.

Traveller Taskforce Post-Primary and Youth Sub-group Meeting

Background

Coalisland

Coalisland is a medium size town (population 6000 approximately) surrounded by well populated rural area. The main industries in the area are heavy engineering and construction.

Traveller Population

Most travellers live on a traveller site known as An Tearman. It was built in the 1980's by Dungannon Council with facilities for twelve permanent mobiles/caravans and a halting site for 3/4 caravans. At present there are over 30 mobiles/caravans.

There are two smaller sites on the Derry and Washingbay Roads – accommodating about 15 families. A small number of families (10 approx) live in Housing Executive accommodation. 2/3 families own their houses.

St Joseph's College

St Joseph's College is a non-selective, all ability 11-16 Catholic Maintained school. School population is 414, with a teaching staff of 33 full-time and 1 part-time. A Learning Support Centre is also part of the school. The College now has 46 traveller pupils which represents just over 11% of the school population. There are also 24 newcomer pupils in the College.

Personnel/Agencies that assist in Traveller Education

Internal

Two members of staff who provide additional support in Numeracy/Literacy

Teacher/Traveller Liaison Officer (TTLO)

Attendance Co-ordinator

Secretarial Time

External

Kieran Shields and Jim Maye and their IEP Staff

Educational Welfare Officers (EWO)

Coalisland Training Services (CTS)

Challenges

▪ **Attendance, punctuality, getting out early**

Traveller attendance is well below the average, some have poor punctuality in the mornings, some parents take out pupils early on a regular basis. Due to these factors traveller pupils miss a lot of class time.

Average attendance of the last 3 years

| Group | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 (to date) |
|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| Year8 | 53.7% | 60.8% | 73% |
| Year 9 | 58.1% | 55.9% | 69% |
| Year 10 | 26.8% | 37.9% | 61% |
| Year 11 | -- | 11.8% | 27% |
| Year 12 | -- | -- | 13% |

▪ **Students not completing their education**

It is difficult to get pupils in Year 12 (and sometimes in Year 11) to come to school on a regular basis.

▪ **Traveller traditions**

- Some parents may not see value in education, particularly at KS4.
- Engaged/married at 15/16/17.
- Parents have difficulty in making their children go to school – leads to conflict in the home, parents sometimes give in and do not send them.

▪ **Parental involvement in education**

- Attendance at parent/teacher meetings is sometimes low.
- Difficulty in contacting parents during the school day.

▪ **Curriculum**

- Providing a curriculum (less restricted) to meet needs of traveller pupils.

▪ **Funding**

- The support/resources for traveller education require additional funding which can be a strain on the school budget.

Strengths

▪ **Curriculum**

(a) Literacy/Numeracy Support

Additional help is provided by two support teachers in literacy/numeracy. Pupils are taken in small groups/single for this help. Each pupil has their own folder containing their literacy/numeracy work. If they are absent they just resume with their work where they had left off.

Pupils attend well on days they are receiving help. Support teachers and TTLO feel that literacy/numeracy have improved and are at present compiling data to verify this.

(b) Key Stage 3 – variation in the fixed curriculum

Pupils in Years 9 and 10 go to CTS on two afternoons. In CTS boys have classes in joinery, bricklaying and electrical work. Girls have classes in hairdressing and beauty care. SELB provide funding for the transport and CTS. A support teacher travels on the minibus and TTLO co-ordinates the programme.

This work is very popular with pupils. Their average attendance has improved. On the two days involved their attendance for the whole group in sometimes 100%. Their workrate in other subject areas have also improved.

(c) Key Stage 4

Attendance in KS4 is well below average. Pupils at the end of KS3 have indicated that they would like a similar scheme as (b) in KS4. Meetings have taken place between the College, SELB IEP Staff and CTS regarding a possible programme. This programme would include (a) building on the work completed in KS3 in CTS leading to certification – GCSE Occupational Studies. (b) providing 1-2 days work experience per week. (c) attending for two days in the College. When developed it is hoped to pilot the programme with year 11 pupils in school year 2010/11.

(d) GCSE

There are three pupils (2 girls and 1 boy) who are following GCSE courses and have very good attendance. The year 12 should obtain reasonable grades.

Funding

The essential financial support provided by Kieran Shields, Jim Maye and their team from SELB over the years have enabled the College to provide the resources and curriculum described above.

Parental Involvement

There is an increasing number of parents who are beginning to realise the value of education – they want to see their children complete their 5 years in secondary education.

EWO

EWO's work closely with the College and the traveller families. They use many approaches from organising meetings with the College/family/pupil to encourage better attendance, to taking some families to court.

Integration

Traveller pupils are encouraged to and do play an active part in all aspects of school life – such as school shows, assemblies, carol service, sports teams, etc.

Future

Present programmes have shown improvement in attendance and progress in literacy/numeracy. The College will build on these and will continue to develop other imaginative and creative programmes to improve traveller education with the help of IEP officers from the SELB.

Consultation with Traveller parents in Derry March 2010

Key issues highlighted by parents include:

- Children leaving primary school, not at an adequate level for secondary school; therefore children feel more isolated, and find it very difficult to keep up with their class
- Bullying is a major problem with children complaining of teachers not taking their complaints seriously
- Teachers believing a settled child before a Traveller
- Lack of recognition or celebration of Traveller culture; unlike other cultures
- Parents cannot help their children with homework due to their own illiteracy
- Little has changed since parents themselves were at school; this does not encourage parents to send their children to school even though they do want their children educated. This is particularly evident in post primary
- Some parents who are particularly protective of their daughters do not like their children in a mixed school; indeed they do not like their daughters being influenced by the social attitudes and values of young people from the settled community

What parents felt could help improve the situation:

- Out of school and homework support essential
- Celebration of Traveller culture within the school
- Cultural awareness training for school children and teachers
- Understanding from schools of the difficulties Traveller children face and work with Travellers and TSG's to help solve problems
- Develop stronger relationships with Traveller parents in the interests of children attending school.
- Develop specific programmes for Traveller children aged 14+ who do not attend school/ similar to the EOTAS programme that would be designed to meet the needs of Traveller children; including vocational training

Report on Workshop
Youth Provision for young Travellers

1 April 2010

In Attendance: Barry Fegan (An Munia Tober), Gavin Deeney (DTSG), John Mc Laughlin (BELB), Pat Jordan (NEELB), Paula Smyth (SELB), Sinead Mc Shane (SELB), Esther Halsall (SEELB), Liam Curran (WELB)

Facilitator: Gerard Doran (S/WELB)

Agenda

| | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Welcome and Introductions | 10.00 |
| • Outline your role and Provision in your area | |
| 2. Discussion Group 1 | 10.30 |
| • Issues and Barriers | |
| 3. Feedback | 11.30 |
| 4. Break | 12.00 |
| 5. Discussion Group 2 | 12.15 |
| • Future Strategy/Recommendations | |
| 6. Lunch | 1.00 |
| 7. Feedback | 1.30 |
| 8. Depart | 2.00 |

Each participant received a copy of the Census information and the Task Force briefing and the facilitator outlined the broad objectives of the Task Force and sub-groups.

Feedback Discussion Group 1

Issues

- Raising awareness of culture and cultural norms/family pressures
- Lack of understanding by settled community
- Mistrust between travelling community and settled community/service providers
- Racist attitudes
- Raising awareness of services and the value of services
- Gender issues
- Family economy
- Young marriages
- Feuding families/ conflict with settled community
- Leaving school/education in general/lack of flexibility in curriculum and structures e.g. timetables, standards
- Emotional well-being
- Life aspirations
- Links with parents/whole family approach
- Lack of aspirational role models
- Lack of strategy to integrate youth work into possible interventions
- Difficulties securing “buy in” from travelling community e.g. indigenous leadership
- Low resource base/temporary or “targeted” funding difficulties

Barriers

- Lack of knowledge about Traveller culture/prejudice
- Mistrust on both sides
- Lack of funding
- Bureaucracy/rules
- Lack of dependable research/collation of available research
- Parents/Grandparents
- Awareness of the potential of youth work interventions
- Perception of youth work/ers informal education

Feedback Discussion Group 2

Recommendations

Research

Independent academic research to more extensively explore needs, using a variety of methods, particularly action research and involving focus groups of young travellers

A Strategic Action Plan

Any plan needs to expand on the potential role of youth service both in schools and in informal settings, not all “education” takes place in schools. Informal approaches can be of significant benefit, particularly in the type of “wrap around” approach that is evidently required.

A long-term view of development and programming must be introduced.

Key elements of this Plan should include Transition programmes – primary to post-primary, school to work – family work, capacity-building, leadership pathways for indigenous workers, community development, inter-cultural work and good relations, and bespoke/flexible youth service interventions and pilot programmes tailored to individual settings. Opportunities must be introduced to broaden horizons for young travellers and to stimulate awareness of cultural diversity. This could include “outreach” to the settled community to create a greater awareness of Traveller culture.

The ‘curriculum’ offered for young Travellers may need to be considered to provide more skills/entrepreneurial or ‘enterprising’ dimensions and delivered at a time suitable to the client group.

A key feature of the Plan would be to develop a strategy to effectively collaborate across agencies to provide seamless services. Integrated training needs to be available for those engaged in this work.

Administrative and bureaucratic demands need to be addressed and more flexibility introduced to funding schemes. Outcomes should be tailored to specific environmental settings and be much more realistic given the disadvantageous starting point for many groups.

Vocational qualifications offered by CCEA

Introduction:

Post-primary education includes a range of possible choices, including academic and vocational areas. CCEA offers a range of qualifications to provide opportunities for all learners to be involved in the curriculum and examinations, catering for a wide range of needs and interests:

“CCEA qualifications meet the changing needs of a wide range of learners of all ages in schools, colleges and other educational settings, creating diverse opportunities for learners’ personal fulfilment, social inclusion and cohesion, and economic prosperity”¹.

Thus, CCEA strives to make provision available for all.

CCEA vocational qualifications:

In addition to GCSEs and GCEs, CCEA offers a range of vocational qualifications in the post-primary sector. These are classified as follows:

- **Entry Level:** *“Entry Level specifications build on the knowledge, understanding and skills developed within Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. They are designed to be suitable for learners for whom achievement at GCSE is an unrealistic target”².* The Entry Level specifications enable progression to GCSE, GNVQ Foundation and NVQ Level 1 courses in related subjects.
- **Awards and Certificates in Education, Training and Skills (ACETS):** a range of 46 qualifications are available, which aim to prepare learners for the working environment.
- **BTEC:** the qualifications are offered in partnership with Edexcel. BTEC Firsts are aimed at 14-16 year-olds and BTEC Nationals at the post-16 age range.
- **Essential Skills:** in literacy and numeracy. These are aimed at adults, but may be suitable for some older learners.
- **Key Skills:** CCEA provides Key Skills in Northern Ireland, including support tailored specifically to the needs of schools, colleges and workplaces. A total of 24 qualifications are available, covering areas such as numeracy, communication, problem solving and working with others.
- **Graded Objectives in Modern Languages (GOML):** these provide short-term goals in language and are suitable as pre-GCSE languages. There are five languages available: French, German, Irish, Italian and Spanish.
- **Occupational Studies:** *“The qualification is designed to be accessible with learners of all abilities. It is also intended to provide a coherent and*

¹ <http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/qualifications/>

² http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/qualifications/entry_level/index.aspx

*flexible programme, which is rooted in Practical and Occupational Contexts*³. There is a choice of 12 vocational areas (Appendix 1) and candidates can study for a Single Award, by taking two units. Anecdotal evidence suggests that pupils find the qualification very motivating, with instances of pupils working on their projects in school/college outside of taught hours.

A summary of these qualifications and the subjects available is attached.

Alternative providers:

Further vocational qualifications are available from providers other than CCEA. For example, the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) describes “*more than 650 new qualifications on the QCF that have been developed for Foundation Learning programmes*”⁴. These include 32 ‘shared’ units, which may be used by any awarding organisation and which can lead to an Entry 1 qualification. However, Foundation Learning does not currently extend to Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, the ‘shared’ units are included as Appendix 2. City and Guilds offer over 500 individual qualifications in a range of industries, classified according to subject (Appendix 3).

Health and Safety qualifications may be useful for a range of employment scenarios. For example, The National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) offers awards, certificates and diplomas in health and safety, including a ‘Health and Safety at Work’ qualification⁵.

However, it is important to consider whether external qualifications will be recognised in Northern Ireland.

Employment opportunities:

O’Hanlon (2010) highlights the potential disengagement of travellers with post-primary education:

*“Secondary-level schooling is the predominant issue for all Gypsy/Traveller communities. Gypsy/Traveller children are seen to reach maturity and adulthood early in their teens and are expected to ‘work’ and follow the traditional patterns of their families. As a consequence, secondary school curricula aimed to satisfy a mainstream knowledge economy is not relevant for these needs. Gypsy/Traveller children are at extreme risk of failing to transfer to secondary school and many choose to absent themselves”*⁶.

³ http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/qualifications/occupational_studies/index.aspx

⁴ <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/qualifications/foundation-learning/560.aspx>

⁵ <http://www.nebosh.org.uk/Qualifications/Certificate/default.asp?cref=633&ct=2>

⁶ O’Hanlon, C. 2010. ‘Whose education? The inclusion of Gypsy/Travellers: continuing culture and tradition through the right to choose educational opportunities to support their social and economic

This may suggest that vocational-based education opportunities, such as those described above, may be more appealing to many travellers. In particular, areas which link directly to work may be of greater interest.

The Welsh Assembly Government recently secured EU funding for Pembrokeshire County Council's Learning and Future Employment project. This aims to include approximately 450 11-19 year-old travellers, by delivering tailored educational opportunities through the local authorities' 'Gypsy Traveller Education Service'. This recognises the need for various educational settings and hopes to result in approximately 300 participants gaining qualification⁷.

Recent research undertaken by the Pavee Point Travellers Centre on 'Traveller Inclusion in the Mainstream Labour Market' found that a key issue was the: "*Implications of the lack of recognised skills and low levels of education among Travellers*"⁸.

The Irish Census 2002 illustrated that 73% of male travellers were unemployed, compared to 9.4% of the total population. Of those who were employed, the largest numbers were in manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail trade and health and social work⁹.

mobility', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, **40:2**, 239 – 254. Available online at <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/section?content=a919462855&fulltext=713240928>.

⁷ <http://wales.gov.uk/news/latest/100312EU/?lang=en>

⁸ Pavee Point Travellers Centre. Factsheet: Travellers and Work. Available at: http://www.paveepoint.ie/fs_work_a.html

⁹ Pavee Point Travellers Centre. Factsheet: Travellers and Work. Available at: http://www.paveepoint.ie/fs_work_a.html

Research by YOUTHREACH, based in the Republic of Ireland, shows the range of employment areas most commonly entered into by the travelling community. The following table is taken directly from Stokes (2004)¹⁰:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| warehousing | in garages | as assembly operators |
| with butchers | on building sites | on stalls |
| black market selling of flags, etc | in recycling | in scrap dealing |
| as nurses' aides | as domestics in hospitals | in primary health care |
| train food trolley operatives | as office cleaners | as canteen workers |
| as supermarket check-out assistants | in sports i.e. boxing | as lifeguards |
| Amusements, e.g. Funderland and similar | in the arts, dancing, singing, traditional crafts | selling cars, and carpets or as car park attendants |
| in gardening | grass cutting | in window washing |
| in youth and community work | | |

A range of CCEA qualifications relate to the employment areas identified by Census 2002 and YOUTHREACH. For example, wider employability skills applicable to several of these areas are included in CCEA's ICT qualifications (available at Entry Level, GCSE, GCE AS and GCE A level), Learning for Life and Work (Entry Level and GCSE) and Personal Money Management (Level 1 certificate). Key Skills are available at Levels 1 to 4 inclusive and also cover a range of skills which can be applied to various working environments.

Specific qualifications relating to career areas include Motor Vehicle and Road User Studies (GCSE) and Performance Skills (Level 1 and Level 2 certificates).

Several BTECs offered by CCEA correspond to the typical employment areas identified above. For example, BTECs in: Business; Construction; Engineering; Health and Social Care; Hospitality; Land-Based; Media; Music and Performing Arts; Retail; and Sport.

Further, Occupational Studies allows candidates to select from a range of optional units, which include skills development for specific areas of work (Appendix 1). This qualification also allows the flexibility for candidates to take individual units over time and at different locations.

¹⁰ Stokes, D. 2004. 'Traveller Education Strategy Submission', YOUTHREACH. Available at: <http://www.youthreach.ie/aatopmenu/Library/TravellersSubmission.htm>.

Summary:

CCEA offers a range of vocational qualifications, many of which are directly applicable to the types of employment recorded as being entered into by travellers. Unitised qualifications allow candidates to take individual units at different locations and times, to complete a course, such as for Occupational Studies. This may be preferable to longer courses for those learners who do move location more frequently. In addition, alternative qualifications are available from other providers.

Appendix 1: Occupational Studies: list of course options

Agriculture

- Animal Care
- Estate Maintenance
- Safe Tractor Operation
- Horse Handling and Exercise
- Environmental Improvement

Care

- Communicate with individuals and report
- Reminisce with individuals
- Enable children to participate in play centres
- The physical care and development of the child

Construction

- Brickwork 1
- Brickwork 2
- Carpentry and Joinery 1
- Carpentry and Joinery 2
- Painting and Decorating 1
- Painting and Decorating 2
- Plastering 1
- Plastering 2
- Plumbing 1
- Plumbing 2
- Wall tiling

Design

- Fashion Design
- Graphic Design
- Interior Design
- Photography

Digital Technology

- Digital music composition
- Digital imaging
- Introduction of digital video production
- Building a website
- Animation using Flash
- Introduction to Flash Game Editing

Engineering

- Electrical wiring practices
- Electronic circuit construction
- Manufacturing Techniques (Sheet Metal Work) - Fabrication
- Manufacturing Techniques – Assembly (Hand Fitting)

Hairdressing and Beauty

- Shampooing and conditioning hair
- Styling hair by blow-drying
- Styling and dressing hair
- Creating up-styles on long hair
- Facial skincare
- Manicure

Horticulture

- Growing plants (propagation)
- Organic gardening
- Plant care
- Floristry

Hospitality and Catering

- Food preparation and cooking (kitchen and larder)
- Counter service
- Food preparation and cooking (patisserie)
- Food safety in catering

Media

- Moving image production and editing skills
- Radio production
- Sound production
- Performing arts and performance skills

Office Administration

- Working in an office setting
- Office procedures – mailing, recording and filing
- Using office equipment
- Communicating within the office

Retail

- Understanding the retail industry
- Payment methods and stock control
- Store design and merchandising
- Customer service

Sport, Leisure and Travel

- Running a leisure event
- Sports leadership
- Investigating sport, leisure and tourism
- Planning a tourist itinerary

Vehicle Studies

- Vehicle servicing and valeting operations
- Basic fast-fit operations
- Basic vehicle maintenance
- Basic vehicle body components and fitting
- Basic vehicle electrics

Appendix 2: QCDA shared units

- Developing communication skills
- Developing reading skills
- Developing writing skills
- Developing ICT skills
- Early mathematics: developing number skills
- Early mathematics: position
- Early mathematics: shape
- Early mathematics: measure
- Early mathematics: sequencing and sorting
- Developing independent living skills: having your say
- Developing independent living skills: keeping safe
- Developing independent living skills: looking after your own home
- Developing independent living skills: being healthy
- Developing skills for the workplace: getting things done
- Developing skills for the workplace: following instructions
- Developing skills for the workplace: health and safety
- Developing skills for the workplace: looking and acting the part
- Developing community participation skills: getting out and about
- Travel within the community: going places
- Using local health services
- Developing learning skills: learning to learn
- Dealing with problems
- Getting on with other people
- Developing self awareness: all about me
- Rights and responsibilities: everybody matters
- Encountering experiences: being part of things
- Engaging with the world around you: people
- Engaging with the world around you: events
- Engaging with the world around you: objects
- Understanding what your money is used for
- Developing community participation skills: personal enrichment
- Developing independent living skills: looking after yourself

Taken directly from:

<http://www.qcda.gov.uk/qualifications/foundation-learning/560.aspx>

Appendix 3: City and Guilds Subject Areas

- [Advice, Guidance & Counselling](#)
- [Business Support Skills](#)
- [Children & Young People](#)
- [Cleaning](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Construction & Building](#)
- [Design & Craft](#)
- [Education & Training](#)
- [Engineering & Transport](#)
- [General Learning \(includes Languages, Skills for Life and Key Skills\)](#)
- [Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy, Nail Technology and Complementary Therapies](#)
- [Health & Social Care](#)
- [Health Science & Technology](#)
- [Hospitality & Catering](#)
- [Information Technology \(IT\)](#)
- [Justice](#)
- [Land-based Industries](#)
- [Management](#)
- [Media and Photography](#)
- [Printing and Graphic Communications](#)
- [Processing & Manufacturing](#)
- [Retail, Distribution & Road Passenger Vehicle Driving](#)
- [Security](#)
- [Sport, Recreation and Playwork](#)
- [Telecommunications](#)
- [Travel, Tourism & Aviation](#)

Taken directly from:

<http://www.cityandguilds.com/uk-qualifications.html>

POST PRIMARY & YOUTH SUBGROUP RESIDENTIAL

A Group Suggestions – Refined

Youth

1. **By September 2011** through the Inter-Board Youth Panel to raise the resource of the Youth Service in schools and with the Traveller community. **By September 2013** we would expect an increase of 20% of primary, post-primary and special schools using the Youth Service.
2. **By September 2011** through the DE to commission research to identify the specific needs and benefits of the Youth Service for Traveller children in both formal and informal settings.
3. **By September 2011** Youth Service to develop a strategy to designed to improve communication between the Youth Service and the Traveller community. Consider the use of TSGs and voluntary groups to facilitate this.
4. **By September 2011** Youth Service to develop a training programme designed to improve cultural awareness and diversity within the Traveller community. We suggest the programme should involve peer educators who are members of the Traveller community who could acknowledge the range of diversity within Traveller culture.
5. **By September 2011** to consider the development of a Traveller Youth Worker Forum across N Ireland to share information and highlight good practice and acknowledge regional differences. It is envisaged that this forum should meet on a quarterly basis and form part of the Regional Traveller Service.

Post Primary

1. **By September 2011** to encourage schools to review their attendance and pastoral care policies and strategies with a view to improving the attendance of their Traveller pupils.
2. **From February 2011** post primary schools will develop a comprehensive Transition Programme for Year 7 pupils. This should embrace the Year 8 intake teacher of the post primary school, Traveller parents, the visiting Traveller Support teacher and the primary school staff.
3. **By September 2011** through the DE to commission research to identify the reasons and issues which result in the disengagement of Traveller pupils in KS3 and KS4.
4. **By September 2011** schools should meet with Traveller parents to inform them and agree on the range of courses available within the school and how education can be of value to their children and improve their future.

POST PRIMARY & YOUTH SUBGROUP RESIDENTIAL

B Group Suggestions – Refined**Youth**

1. **By September 2011** youth provision should be restructured on a regional basis. Such a **regional service** would be responsible for
 - Core working principles
 - Research – to identify
 - a. needs of traveller community
 - b. examples of best practice from within Northern Ireland and other jurisdictions
 - Communication with different stake-holder groups, e.g. traveller parents, traveller support groups etc
 - Sustainable funding that is **policy and strategy lead** and which is guaranteed for at least 3 years (e.g. September 2011 to September 2014)
 - Links with school: youth service and school staff should share expertise and work together to be in a better position to meet the needs of traveller children. This will involve joint training for workers from both sectors who will then provide joint training programmes for the traveller children
 - Programmes to meet the identified needs of the traveller community and the education service
 - Training (see Links)

Who? ELB Youth Services and CASS

Post Primary Schools

1. **By September 2011** a statutory requirement for all children in post primary schools in Northern Ireland should be sign-posted in the Curriculum, e.g. within the Citizenship strand of Learning for Life and Work

Who? CCEA with guidance from Traveller Education Forum
2. **By March 2011** quality learning and teaching materials should be designed, produced and made available to schools to teach all pupils about traveller culture

Who? CCEA with guidance from Traveller Education Forum

POST PRIMARY & YOUTH SUBGROUP RESIDENTIAL

3. **By June 2011** training on traveller culture should be planned, organised and delivered to relevant teachers and those training to be teachers
Who? ELB CASS and Teacher Training Institutions

4. **By December 2011** all post primary schools should organise an event to highlight traveller culture. The nature and size of the event will be dependent on the level of contact the school has with the traveller community
Who? School with guidance and support from ELBs

5. **By September 2011** schools should begin to put in place a range of courses at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, including 'taster courses' or programmes like 'Steps', to meet the needs of children from the traveller community. There should be more choice for students and the option to pursue different but relevant educational pathways. This will involve schools collaborating with other schools and training organisations
Who? DE, DEL, ETi, CASS and Schools

6. **By June 2012** accreditation should be in place for students following alternate / disappplied courses in post-primary schools
Who? CCEA and QCA

7. **By September 2011** appropriate careers advice and guidance should be in place in post-primary schools that take account of the 'world of work' of the traveller community and the economy that they work in. Children from the traveller community should have the opportunity to participate in work experience programmes outside their own community and have access to formal advice and guidance from the careers service
Who? DEL, DE, ETi, Careers Service Northern Ireland, ELB CASS and Careers Teachers

Traveller Taskforce Post Primary & Youth Subgroup

Two-day Residential

on Thursday 15th & Friday 16th April 2010

in Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim

Agenda - Day 1

- 10:00 Review of progress, issues arising to date
- 10:15 Presentations by Mr John McGoran (DE), Mr P J Campbell (Principal, St Joseph's College, Coalisland) and Ms Paula Smyth (SELB Youth Section)
- 10:30 On-going debate re youth and post primary issues – making use of reports, circulars, evaluations, good practice etc Break into 2 separate groups (flip charts)
- 11:40 Report back session and open discussion – 2 Groups How can voluntary sector, youth sector, complement primary and post primary education for Travellers? – Make a list of issues that arise in bullet point format – any additional recommendations here to be included?
- 12:30 Lunch
- 14:00 Report Back and discussion
- 14:30 Can you prioritize the issues? Youth – Post Primary. Can you justify why the shared observations are being made? Is there good practice either in NI, ROI or GB that should be supported?
- 15:00 Can you select no more than four recommendations 4 Youth 4 Post Primary? What empirical evidence do you have to support these particular shared observations?
- 16:30 Report back and discussion

Traveller Taskforce Post Primary & Youth Subgroup

Two-day Residential

on Thursday 15th & Friday 16th April 2010

in Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim

Agenda - Day 2

- 10:00 Review of the recommendations to date
- Youth
 - Post Primary
- 10:30 Devise an action plan to deliver your 4 objectives.
1. What steps and processes will be involved in delivering these objectives?
 2. What will be the projected cost?
- (Groups work either independently or collectively – use flip-charts)
- 12.30 Lunch
- 14:00 Facilitators from action planning to provide feedback
- 14:30 How best can the group's findings be presented to the Taskforce?
- 15:30 Plenary and Close