

'Is Britain Fairer?': Key facts and findings on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

'Is England Fairer?' (2016) is the Equality and Human Rights Commission's five-yearly review of equality and human rights in England. This factsheet captures some of our key findings and challenges regarding Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

Race is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The Act prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; protects individuals from unfair treatment; and promotes a fair and more equal society. It protects Gypsies, Roma and Travellers as well as all other race groups from discrimination in a variety of fields, including employment, education, the exercise of public functions and the provision of services. **In the 2011 Census for England and Wales, 0.1% of the population identified as a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller.**

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students experience high levels of bullying and exclusion in schools and have lower levels of attainment

They were less likely to achieve 'a good level of development' in their early years (at Early Years Foundation Stage) in 2013/14 (**19.1%** for Gypsy and Roma children, and **30.9%** for Traveller children, compared with **61.8%** Other White children).

A lower percentage of Gypsy and Roma children (13.8%) and Traveller children (17.5%) achieved five GCSEs graded A*-C in 2012/13 compared with Other White children (60.3%) and the attainment gap widened between 2008/09 and 2012/13.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are often subjected to bullying at school. Notably, there was a shortage of expertise to provide effective support to Roma pupils.

They were also among those most likely to be excluded from school.

Their exclusion rates were four to five times higher than the national average in 2012/13: 136.3 per 1,000 pupils for Gypsy and Roma children and 169.4

for Traveller children, compared with 41.8 for Other White children.

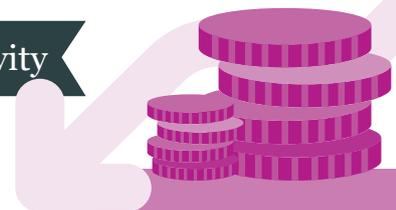


Gypsy and Traveller communities have lower levels of economic activity

Gypsies or Irish Travellers had the lowest recorded economic activity in England and Wales in 2011. The most common reason given for economic inactivity was looking after the home or family.

Over half of Gypsies and Travellers aged 16 or over who were economically active were employed. Higher percentages among all adults in England and Wales aged 16 or over were unemployed (**20%** compared with **7%** for all adults in England and Wales) or were self-employed (**26%** compared with **14%**).

In 2011, Gypsy/Travellers were twice as likely to be self-employed compared with the general population in Scotland (**24%** compared with **12%**).



One study found that Roma are often in low-paid employment, face discrimination in employment agency work, and work informally for 'cash in hand'.

Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities often experience poor access to healthcare

In 2011, **14.1%** of Gypsies and Irish Travellers in England and Wales rated their health as bad or very bad, compared with **5.9%** of White British and **9.2%** of White Irish people.

In 2011, a greater proportion of Gypsy/Travellers rated their health as bad or very bad (**15%**) compared with the average for Scotland (**6%**).

Compared with the general population, Gypsies and Travellers are more likely to **suffer bad health**. This includes lower life expectancy, high infant mortality rates, high maternal mortality rates, low child immunisation levels, higher prevalence of anxiety and depression, chronic cough or bronchitis (even after smoking is taken into account), asthma, chest pain and diabetes, and higher rates of smoking. This is exacerbated by the fact that many Gypsies and Travellers remain unregistered with GPs.



There is emerging evidence that health inequalities of Roma people are similar to those identified among Gypsies and Travellers, including a high prevalence of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, premature myocardial infarction, obesity, asthma and mental health issues such as stress, anxiety and depression.



Cultural norms may prevent some Roma people from accessing services for support with mental health, sexual health, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Poor familiarity with healthcare provisions and language barriers may make it difficult for them to access health services.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are over-represented in prison and more likely to report feeling unsafe in custody

In 2013-14, **4%** of the prison population in England and Wales identified as Gypsy, Roma or Traveller in the HM Inspectorate of Prisons' (HMIP) prisoner survey.



HMIP stated in their 2014 report that Gypsies, Roma and Travellers were more likely to report feeling unsafe in prison (**46%**) compared with other prisoners (**33%**), and more likely to say they had been victimised by other prisoners (**36%** compared with **23%**) and by staff (**40%** compared with **27%**). They were also more likely to report that they had been physically restrained or had been in segregation in the previous six months (**14%** compared with **6%**).



The exact size of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population in prison is not known because levels of self-reporting were low and the option to record a prisoner's ethnicity as 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' was only added to the Prison National Offender Management Information System for the first time in 2011.

Their vulnerability in prison may be further heightened by separation from their families, high levels of mental health conditions, lack of adequate mental health support and some not being able to read or write.



Negative attitudes towards Gypsies, Roma and Traveller communities are still widely held

The Spring 2014 Global Attitudes Survey indicated that 50% of people in Britain reported having an unfavourable view of Roma.

Evidence from a study carried out in Devon found that some people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities had hidden their ethnic identity in order to access employment and services, and others said their children were bullied at school and that they had been refused entry to pubs and cinemas.



THEATRE

Cinema



The UK is failing to live up to its European commitments in relation to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

In 2011, the European Commission launched the Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, which aims to promote the social inclusion and integration of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers across the EU. Two years later, the European Commission concluded that the UK had failed to make progress on almost all of the measures contained in its framework, including all four of the steps aimed at fighting discrimination.