
History

The Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT) was founded in 1973 by Lady Plowden, Tom Lee - the General Secretary of the Romany Guild and others from Gypsy and other Traveller communities. Lady Plowden had chaired the major Government study "Children and their Primary Schools" in 1967, which found that Gypsy children had the worst access to education of any group.

ACERT was primarily a campaigning and lobbying organisation, initially on educational issues.

From 1979 onwards, there was some government funding for representatives and organisations who were acting as a link between Gypsy and Traveller communities and local authorities and government. ACERT became involved with work on encouraging and promoting site provision, including private site provision in particular, for which it received government funding. Later in the 1990's, ACERT received government funding to research progress (or not) with local authorities' development of planning policies on Gypsy sites. That research became a publication by the Policy Press of Bristol University which detailed all the planning policies on the subject at that time, from all English local authorities. Further commissioned research sought to analyse the reasons why private Gypsy site applications were turned down. In 2003/4, both pieces of research were considered by a Select Committee examining the issue of site provision.

ACERT continues to be a lobbying organisation on education issues and maintains close links and many common aims with other voluntary

organisations promoting the rights and entitlements of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers .



Recent initiatives

Between 2003 and 2010 ACERT worked closely with other organisations and government departments to address issues of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller underachievement and exclusion from education. These initiatives included Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, the introduction of the ethnic monitoring categories for Traveller of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma, and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Strategy. Since 2010, we have lobbied government on issues such as racist bullying, the rights of nomadic families, the status of Gypsies under planning law, Elective Home Education and issues affecting women's equality.

In 2011 ACERT was the National Focal Point for the Council of Europe's ROMED programme.

Training was provided for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers to develop skills as mediators to enable their communities to access public services such as healthcare, education and employment.

In 2013 we organised a seminar for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in Further and Higher Education and, unsuccessfully, sought EU funding to develop this work.

ACERT has been represented on the Department for Education Stakeholder Group set up to share good practice and to promote inclusion. We respond to government circulars regarding education and community issues and give advice to individuals and organisations working with the communities and to members of the communities themselves.

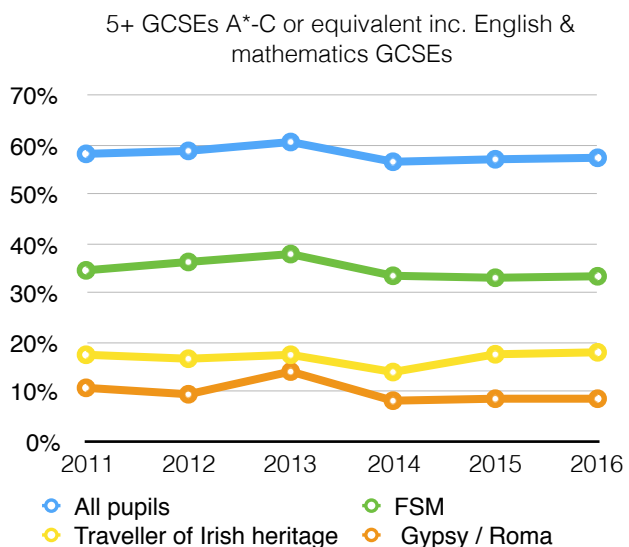
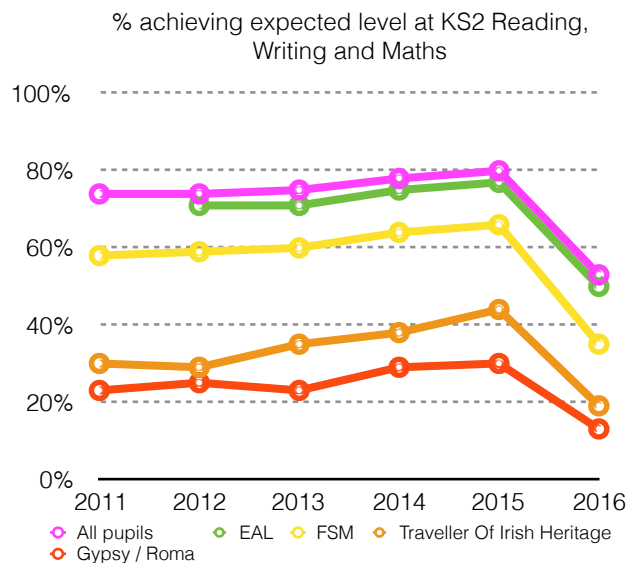
ACERT has an executive committee which meets each month and is made up of members elected at the annual general meeting held in September. The EC members are also trustees of the charity.

Work to be done

Attainment and attendance levels for children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage are significantly lower than for children from majority communities despite improvements in recent years.

There are many factors which can prevent children achieving their full educational opportunities. Research has shown that schools who work in partnership with parents, are flexible and constructive in addressing challenges, show respect for culture and identity, have high expectations and address challenges constructively are effective in improving outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

Recent data, extracted from national statistics indicates that much remains to be done, especially with older students.



Membership

Membership of ACERT is open to all people from any Gypsy, Roma and Traveller background as well as non Travellers. The chair and vice chairs are community members with long experience of working with local authorities, Traveller Education Services and supporting children and families.

Membership forms are available on-line at acert.org.uk/join/ or by post from:

The Membership Secretary
ACERT
Little Kiln,
Pottery Road,
Bovey Tracey,
Devon
TQ13 9DS

Payments can also be made using Paypal.
Details at acert.org.uk/join/

Officers

Chair: Lisa Smith
Vice-chairs: Kealey Sly, Valdemar Kalinin
Treasurer: Anne Walker

Charity number: 800267

Contact us at: info@acert.org.uk

Website: www.acert.org.uk

Phone: 020 83741286

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/acert.org/



**Advisory Council for the Education
of Romany and other Travellers**

ACERT is a community-led national charity that works for equalities and human rights of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, specifically:

- Equal access to education,
- Safe and secure accommodation,
- Equal access to health and other community services,
- Good community relations and an end to discrimination on racial and other grounds.