

Improving educational outcomes for children of travelling families

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 22 February 2013

Your comments must reach us by that date.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Reason for confidentiality:

Name	Brian Foster
Organisation (if applicable)	ACERT Advisory council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers
Address:	PO Box 526 Sevenoaks Kent TN13 9PF tel: 020 8374 1286

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the Department on 0370 000 2288

or by email: TravellingFamilies.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Public Communications Unit on:

Telephone: 0370 000 2288

e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk

Please place an 'x' in the box that best describes you as a respondent.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent of Travelling Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Headteacher/Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> School Support Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> School Governing Body
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Union	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Representative Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Interest Group	

Repealing this legislation means that parents are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel could not avail themselves of the defence provided by section 444(6) EA 1996. However, current provisions would still allow families that travel the flexibility to ensure that their children continue to receive education, for example through dual registration at another school while away from the home school.

1 Should section 444(6) of the 1996 Education Act be repealed?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

The Government's case

ACERT is not convinced by the arguments put forward in the supporting document. We are in absolute agreement that children who attend poorly are unlikely to achieve well, and that this is a major issue affecting the outcomes of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners. However, none of the evidence put forward relates specifically to s444(6) defences. Reference is made to Charlie Taylor's review, which describes a range of situations familiar to those of us who seek to improve attendance of children from these communities, but none of them refer to the s444(6) defence.

The attendance data relates to children ascribed to the Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage ethnic codes. It does not relate to circus and fairground families, or New Travellers all of whom may be mobile for the purposes of earning their living. We believe repeal would have a significant impact on these groups, even though they do not figure in the evidence presented.

Undermining Distance Learning

Distance Learning has been developed over a period of years to enable children from families who move from place to place to seek work to continue to follow the curriculum. We believe this is an appropriate way to respond to the educational needs of highly mobile children.

However, support for Distance Learning has been undermined in recent years by:

- cuts to Traveller Education Support Services and limitations on their roles,
- the demise of ELAMP (the Electronic Learning and Mobility Project) and the successor Home Access programmes, other than for pupils with Special Needs
- the increase in the proportion of Secondary Schools no longer under local authority control, and
- the emphasis by the DFE and OFSTED on narrower, school-focused definitions of teaching and learning.

The repeal of s444 (6) would add another nail to the coffin and remove

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 22 February 2013

Send by post to:

Department for Education
Pupil Performance Team
(2nd Floor)
Great Smith Street
Westminster
London SW1P 3BT

Send by e-mail to: TravellingFamilies.CONSULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk