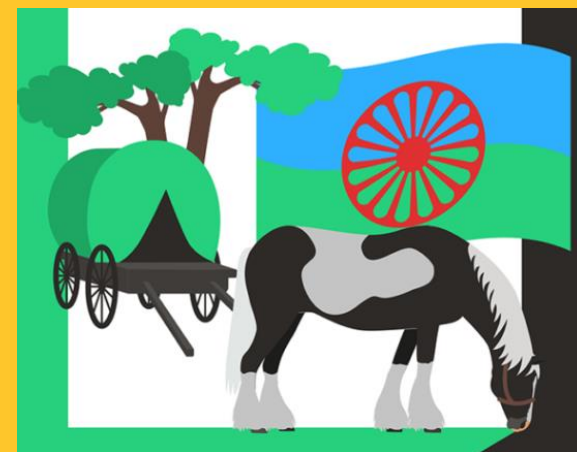


Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Children in Elective Home Education

Tammy Whittaker

Community Learning Officer (Traveller Education) for Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Families
Traveller Education



Education Support for GRT in Bury

I am the Community Learning Officer (Traveller Education) responsible for Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Families in the Local Authority of Bury

I am part of a team of 4. The other Community Learning Officers are responsible for EHE, CME and International New Arrivals

I have been visiting the traveller sites (council and private), fairground sites, settled GRT families in houses and encampments for over 6 years in Bury to make positive relationships, gain trust, show consistency, be supportive, demonstrate cultural awareness and to be pro active to continue good practice

I am welcomed on sites, families know when I visit, parents message me if they specifically want me to call to their trailer and I am typically one of the only professionals who visit the sites

My focus is Education, to encourage and assist in placing GRT children into Nurseries and schools, to support them being in education and this incorporates parental choice to EHE





Fernhill Site - Bury

Bury Council has owned and operated Fernhill since 1990 initially as a Transit Site (intended for short term use).

It was recognised that the site was not deemed compliant with Traveller Site Model Standards of safety relating to fire hazards, land contamination (was previously a land fill and located next to the Council 'Tip'), overcrowding, disrepair and needed to be reclassified as a Permanent Site.

The site closed for a year in 2023 for the refurbishment.....

<https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/bury-council-redevelopment-and-existing-gypsy-and-traveller-site>



Bury
Council

Fernhill Site - 12 pitches & each has:

- * private amenity block with bathroom, kitchen, dining/lounge area, utility room
- * Land per plot suitable for a mobile home, touring caravan and parking
- * Electric Vehicle charging plots
- * Office on site for council admin/housing officer/Traveller Education Officer/Community Learning/EHE



Private owned site

The Private Site (Todd Street Caravan Park), owned by the Boswell Family, is back-to-back to the Council owned site (illustrated as white on picture) and has 16 plots

Both sites have residential families that are all known to each other and typically are English Gypsy

Reasons GRT Families often choose to EHE

Cultural with families following what is the norm for the community (especially on sites)

No settled place for some GRT families who travel constantly often due to not having a resident site place to have a settled home as few sites available

Discrimination in education with schools and Local Authorities not understanding GRT Culture

Poor previous experiences of Child, Parents, Grand parents in the past and have not been engaged in how supportive a school can be

Bullying partly due to primary schools being perceived as nurturing places where regular contact with teachers helps to facilitate cultural understanding and reduce the risk of bullying. In contrast, secondary schools are often seen as impersonal that lack understanding of GTR cultures and are unable or unwilling to protect GTR children from racist bullying

Encouragement from Schools & Local Authorities to EHE as a solution to poor attendance, challenging behaviours and bullying

The Traveller Movement (TM) has analysed data from the Department for Education and found that since 2010, on average, only 51% of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) children in state-funded primary schools go on to attend secondary school, as compared to 97% of non-GTR children.



What's working well in Bury for Gypsy children on Sites

- I visit the sites weekly at a known day for the families. This has been for over 6 years and can be in term time and school holiday time (children like to show me their trailers in the holidays)
- Children start to be known from birth as families are seen weekly by me
- Relationship building on every visit even if I just knock on the trailer door, a wave and a smile to parents. Understand this can take time to gain trust
- Families share their confidence in me to other new families who arrive on site, which starts making relationship building easier
- I have typically placed the children into nursery and school and know the families well which include extended family, grandparents etc. A GRT family encompasses everyone!
- All the site children go to one primary school – Peel Brow. It is a 10-minute drive away and therefore not the most local. Peel brow School is small in student numbers. The School has worked with me and the Gypsy Site Community tirelessly for 6 years and the result is that 10% of the school is English Gypsy from the sites
- I work in Peel Brow School for 1 morning a week (sometimes more) to see all of the Gypsy children in class, they have time to talk to me, lunch together etc
- I work with the school on Attendance, T Codes and Cultural GRT values
- Children from the site only go to Primary school then become EHE and I complete the EHE referral paperwork with parents (to support their limited literacy skills)

How does this practice support EHE in Bury?

- Children are known to me at home on the site, in school (if been on roll) and when become EHE they are seen regularly and not just once a year for the Annual EHE Report
- Already having positive relationships with the GRT Community it was decided that part of my role was to support the EHE engagement on the sites
- As part of the Fernhill re-development, it was stated as one of the requirements that a '*small communal meeting and educational area as a resource for the travellers sustainable, safe and easy to manage and maintain*' – families can use this for EHE and especially if a tutor is paid to come to educate a child on the site rather than use a trailer
- Families share photos to me, these are placed in EHE reports and have included; resources bought, night sky with stars and moon learning, cooking & baking, Appleby Fayre, New Age Christian Conventions, riding bikes, boxing achievements, gardening projects, clothing equipment the boys wear to learn about the dads/male trades, holiday pics, Holy Communion, Fairground Families have attended etc
- Children are safeguarded and seen all year round despite the DfE EHE Guidance which stipulates that children and families should be seen on an annual basis
- I work with parents when children who are EHE want to return to school education & gain places through School's Admissions Team



Safeguarding GRT Children who are EHE in Bury

- The LA are informed that a child/children are going to be EHE this is a parental decision, and I support the completion of the paperwork
- This goes into our MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) screening to check if the Child/children are open to CIN or CP
- If a child is open to CIN or CP the Community Learning Officer for EHE will hold an EHE Multi Agency meeting e.g. attended by Children's Social Care, School, Education Safeguarding, Community Learning Officers responsible for EHE & GRT. Decisions are made at Multi Agency Level if EHE is suitable
- If a child isn't on CIN or CP they are visited by myself to complete the 1st EHE Report which is then sent to the Community Learning Officer responsible for EHE to check



Think outside the classroom box for GRT EHE





*Ride the Air
from Sea to Sea*



*So Your Soul is
Forever Free*



Bury
Council

**Any
Questions?**



Bury
Council

Tammy Whittaker
t.j.whittaker@bury.gov.uk
07879085893