



# Suicide Inequalities in the Gypsy & Traveller Communities

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Friends, Families & Travellers





**FRIENDS,  
FAMILIES &  
TRAVELLERS**

# Gypsy and Traveller Cultural Awareness

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[gypsy-traveller.org](http://gypsy-traveller.org)

# About Friends, Families and Travellers

- National charity that works in behalf of all Gypsies, Travellers and Roma regardless of ethnicity, culture or background.
- Active in advocacy casework, policy and cultural competency training.
- Secretariat for All-Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsies, Traveller and Roma.
- Strategic partner of the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance as the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller member, in consortium with Roma Support Group.
- Registered Royal Society for Public Health training centre.



# Overview of Gypsies and Travellers today

- 300,000 in UK - 2/3 housed & 1/3 in caravans;



- Romany Gypsies, Irish & Scottish Travellers are legally recognised ethnic minorities;
- 25,000 individuals have no authorised place to stop;
- Lots of barriers are present which prevent Gypsies and Travellers from accessing services.



# Suicide Prevention

- The suicide rate for members of the Traveller community is six times higher than the general population, yet Gypsy and Traveller communities are not recognised as a high-risk group.
- FFT (2020)
  - Only 5 out of 79 local authority suicide prevention plans mention Gypsy and Traveller communities.
  - Only 2 out of 79 local authority suicide prevention plans listed any action to address the high suicide rate in their local Gypsy and Traveller communities.



# Perceptions within the Community

- Stigma
  - Still seen as a sign of shame
- Catholicism
  - Unable to be buried on sacred ground
- Legislative changes – people unaware it is no longer illegal
- Perceptions are changing with more discussions and people seeking support
  
- Help from the community
  - One Call Away



# Recommendations and Improvements

- Minimal dataset for coroners to collect post suicide will begin to incorporate Gypsy and Traveller ethnicity.
- Whole population approaches to prevent poor mental health should be accessible for people with low literacy, who are experiencing digital exclusion and those who are self-employed.
- Gypsy and Traveller communities should be listed as a high risk group in the Cross Government Suicide Prevention Plan, with actions identified to address this inequality.



# Hold Out A Hand

- Exploring mental health and suicide prevention within Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Recommendations for engagement
- Train more Gypsies and Travellers to work in front line mental health services
- Create culturally appropriate films and information for Gypsies and Travellers
- The government should take positive action to collect data on deaths by suicide in Gypsy and Traveller communities
- More financial support should be made available to bespoke support services such as 'One Call Away' or to train Gypsy and Traveller people in counselling and suicide prevention services.







**FRIENDS,  
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Thank you

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