

By: Managing Director (Children, Families and Education)

To: Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – 22nd April 2008

Subject: Update: National Developments, outcomes of early consultation with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and review of the Minority Communities Achievement Service

Classification: Unrestricted – for information

Summary: This report updates members on the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, National Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement programme, the outcomes of early consultation with the community and the review of the Minority Communities Achievement Service.

DCSF: Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Programme

1. (1) Kent has been selected as one of 10 Local Authorities taking part in a pilot programme to address the national underachievement of Gypsy Roma and Traveller children. This is in recognition of Kent's significant and diverse Gypsy Roma and Traveller population, and the effective work MCAS is currently undertaking to support Gypsy Roma and Traveller pupils (including new EU arrivals). This is one of the specialist programmes within the Primary and Secondary National Strategies. Kent has joined in the second year of the project, MCAS and Advisory Service Kent are working collaboratively to support five targeted schools, Sittingbourne Community College, (Swale), Dover Road Primary (Gravesham), Edenbridge Primary (Sevenoaks), Castle Hill Primary (Folkestone) and St Peter's (Folkestone). Each school has received £4,000 additional funding to enable them to contribute to the development of effective practice at a national level. The project focuses on:-

- Using data to inform planning
- Trialling literacy interventions
- Developing parental and community engagement

(2) Schools and services attend national and local network meetings to share good practice and feedback termly to the National Strategy Regional Advisor. The project has been extended for a further year and will be evaluated before being rolled out to all Local Authorities. This is providing Kent Local Authority with an opportunity to focus on underachievement within the mainstream school improvement agenda. The pilot work in Kent will inform our future strategy for working with schools to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children.

Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month – June 2008

2. (1) In January 2008 the Department for Children Schools and Families designated June 2008 as the first Gypsy Roma Traveller Month. This reflects national recognition that these are the most marginalised groups who continue to suffer extreme levels of prejudice and discrimination. The aims of the GRTM are to:-

- Explain the history and culture of the communities
- To challenge myths and break down barriers
- To celebrate the richness that these communities contribute to everyday life

(2) Following a series of national meetings facilitated by the DCSF, it was agreed that planning would be led by community members on a regional basis. The contact for the South East is Jake Bowers. Kent is being represented at regional network planning meetings by an MCAS member of staff and members of the local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. This has enabled the exchange of information and ideas for the implementation within the region. 'Education Leeds'¹ has received funding from the DCSF to establish a website to promote Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month (www.gypsyromatravellerhistorymonth.co.uk)

(3) In Kent, schools are being encouraged to take part in a national poster competition led by Education Leeds launched in the House of Lords and endorsed by Lord Adonis, Parliamentary Under Secretary of state for Schools and Learners.

(4) Locally this is an opportunity to draw attention to the projects and developments already in place to promote a greater understanding of Gypsy Roma and Traveller history and achievements, for example, curriculum resources to address the absence of factual information relating to the genocide of Gypsies and Roma in the Holocaust. This forms a significant contribution to KCC's wider strategy to promote equality and community cohesion.

(5) CFE Equality and Diversity Strategy Group are aware of the Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month and consideration is being given to other opportunities to mark this event including through the Equalities Lead Officer Group.

Outcomes of consultation with Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller Community members. Background DCSF: Positive Pathways Statement July 2006.

4. (1) In July 2006 the Department for Schools, Children and Families set out an agenda for the future through 'Positive Pathways for the Future provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children'. Specialist services were encouraged to reassess the orientation of their core work within the context of the agenda for Every Child Matters:-

- To assess the educational needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities by assisting the Local Authority and other partners to fulfil their legal and professional responsibilities.

¹ Education Leeds is a company contracted to provide education services by Leeds City Council. The Traveller Education for Leeds is provided by 'Education Leeds'.

- To focus on the traditional work of supporting families, children and schools, including outreach work with the conditional justification and mutual agreement for modelling what needs to be done.
- To clarify the role, function, leadership and service delivery model within the Local Authority and for any specialist service with the goal of achievement of equality in terms of access, attendance and achievement.

Consultation arrangements

(2) As part of the reassessment of the orientation of the work of MCAS a group including representatives of schools, agencies, voluntary sector and the Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities met between July 2007 and November 2008 to oversee a number of tasks including mapping existing provision and early consultation with communities on priorities and development of options for the future.

Outcomes of consultation

(3) Parents, carers, children and young people were asked about their priorities (within the framework for the five Every Child Matters outcomes), what was working well and their suggestions for actions that would make a real difference. Consultation was conducted informally through an event celebrating Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller culture as well as through the day to day work of the Service. In addition, EU Roma young people were consulted through a community youth provision.

(4) During the consultation community representatives put forward the view that consultation needed to better reflect the diversity of views and experiences within the Kent Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. There was a strong view that future consultation arrangements should enable the collection of the distinct views of Irish Travellers, English Gypsies, EU Accession State Roma and other groups.

(5) Responses from parents and carers included:-

- The majority of parents and carers stated that 'staying safe' was their highest priority for their children. This was clarified in terms of freedom from bullying and racism. 'Enjoying and achieving' and 'Being Healthy' were also identified as the priority by most parents.
- Parents and carers identified that access to pre-school was better where the pre-school was linked to a primary school. Most parents and carers identified that where their child had accessed pre-school this was often with support from MCAS Family Liaison Officers. Some parents and carers indicated that their children had not been to pre-school.
- Parents and carers valued the support they had received in gaining access to school places and in making the transfer to secondary schools particularly in locations where there were shortages of school places.
- The majority of parents and carers identified that schools could do more to tackle racist bullying and also to promote greater understanding amongst the school staff, children and young people about Traveller culture (including language and through cultural events/resources in the school). Parents expressed concern where teachers were perceived to have negative attitudes towards Traveller children and not understand the importance of sibling relationships.
- The majority of parents and carers indicated that they valued face to face and telephone communication with the school rather than letters. Having access to a

known teacher or headteacher was seen as important as was schools being proactive in contacting parents when their children were not in school or when there was good news.

- EU Roma parents and carers emphasised the barriers in terms of language (access to interpretation and translation) and unfamiliarity with the UK education system. Many parents and carers felt it had taken too long to identify school places.

(6) Responses from young people:-

Consultation with young people took place in small groups in Key Stages 3 and 4:-

- The majority of young people stated that 'Enjoying and achieving' and 'Achieving economic well-being' were their highest priorities. 'Staying safe' was also identified as a priority.
- Young people valued the support they received from MCAS Family Liaison Officers in enabling them to settle into a new school.
- Young people identified racist bullying and prejudice as a problem, they felt that schools did not always listen to their concerns.
- Young people felt that schools could do more to improve understanding of the diversity of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture in the school.
- Young people felt that curriculum options should provide genuine choice and schools should not make assumptions about what young people want to do. Young people indicated they valued the opportunity to learn a trade but sometimes felt their options were restricted if they had limited literacy skills.
- EU Accession State Roma also identified that language was a barrier to making friends.

EU Accession State Roma felt it would be helpful for teachers to understand more about the issues they faced in their home country.

(7) The outcome of this consultation will inform:-

- the further development of specialist services during Phase 2 of the implementation of the Local Children Service Partnerships,
- the projects and developments within the Minority Communities Achievement Service Business Plan
- the implementation of the KCC Anti-Bullying Strategy
- the planning of further consultation and involvement structures and activities for example the Maidstone Student Voice network

Mapping of specialist services the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community

3. (1) A priority for the Minority Communities Achievement Service is to work with other service providers to ensure that the services offered to all children, young people and their families/carers in Kent are accessible to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. Strategies to achieve this priority already in place include:-

- partnership work with service managers or commissioning groups to ensure that planning of services is inclusive of, and based on an understanding, of the needs of the Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities in Kent. An example of this would be a member of MCAS being a core member of the Young Carers Strategy Implementation Group.

- Supporting families, children and schools, including outreach work with the conditional justification and mutual agreement for modelling what needs to be done with other professionals and services. An example of this is joint work with Connexions, Education Welfare Officers and school based Family Liaison Officers.
- Training to groups of professionals within the Children's Services arena to raise awareness of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and to share strategies to enable inclusive service delivery.

In 2007 MCAS undertook a small scale mapping exercise to assess the number of other specialist services engaged in outreach work to the Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities in Kent.

Process

(2) Using the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Children's Services Mapping pilot as a model, a questionnaire was developed for an online survey to collect key information on the range and type of services provided e.g.:-

- What type of service and is any part targeted in relation to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people?
- How is the service accessed?
- What is the catchment area?

A number of service providers across different sectors including, Health, Social Care, Early Years, Education, Culture and Youth Services were contacted directly and invited to participate in the survey.

Information on the provision mapping exercise was published on the www.kenttrustweb.org.uk and shared via an e-bulletin.

Responses

(3) 35 Services and Schools responded; 4 had dedicated service provision and 12 some dedicated provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people.

Of the 16 Services and Schools with dedicated service provision or some dedicated sessions:-

- open access and referral through other agencies is the most common access route
- all 5 key outcomes are addressed within the Every Child Matters framework
- services are primarily planned and delivered by single agencies
- very few services are locality based
- service is provided across all age bands of children and young people
- self referral and referral from family and other carers are the main routes of access
- nearly all services offer information and advice and outreach to the community
- some services involve children, young people, parents and carers in the development of service

Innovative Practice

(4) Innovative practice identified through the mapping exercise:-

- facilitating inter-cultural understanding and awareness of human rights
- dedicated service provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people e.g. Traveller Youth Club, Roma Youth Club
- new ways of providing advice and information e.g. the Choice Advice Service provided by Admissions and Transport in Children, Families and Education.
- more flexible ways of delivering service e.g. Keep Moving IT card to enable access to the People's network and library services
- initiating multi-agency action at a local level to ensure positive community relations
- service delivery driven by what young people say and need
- promoting declaration of ethnicity to support schools and other agencies in being able to monitor the effectiveness of their services
- increasing parental involvement at locality level to achieve wider participation and representation.

(5) The outcome of this provision mapping will inform:-

- the further development of multi-agency working during Phase 2 of the implementation of the Local Children Service Partnerships, for example Children's Centres and Extended Schools
- the projects and developments within the Minority Communities Achievement Service Business Plan

Review of the Minority Communities Achievement Service 2008

4. (1) In March 2008 KCC Children, Families and Education Senior Management Team agreed a proposal for informal and formal consultation setting out how MCAS intends to meet budget reductions agreed through the Medium Term Plan whilst maintaining high quality services to schools, settings, children and young people and supporting the transition to Local Children's Service Partnerships.

(2) Budget savings required by the Medium Term Plan are:

Unit	2008/9	2009/10
MCAS	113.8	81.3

Service Unit Budget 2008/9

Funding Source	2007/8	2008/9
KCC Base	533.1	429.3
Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant	164.8	150.
Children's Services Grant	992.6	998.5
¹ Children's Services Grant	0	46
TOTAL	1,690.5	1,623.8

(3) It is proposed to achieve the savings by:-

- Deleting the Monitoring Officer and incorporating this function within all senior service posts
- Deleting 6fte Advisory Teacher Traveller Achievement and replacing them with 4fte Advisory Teacher Minority Ethnic Achievement. The rationale for this development is:-
 - to work with schools to address underachievement of Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller children through the broader strategic framework in place to raise achievement of all children from minority ethnic background.
 - many newly arrived Gypsy Roma children are also learners of English as an Additional Language and any advisory teacher function to address their needs must be linked with locality based provision.
 - Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant 2008-11 (Standards Fund Guidance) identifies Gypsy Roma and Irish Travellers as underachieving groups and are a focus at a national and local level for the Grant. Clusters should identify how they will improve outcomes for this group alongside all other groups.
 - National Primary and Secondary Strategy: Gypsy, Roma and Travellers provides a framework to work systemically this schools, this needs to be within the context of the Primary Strategy and the broader agenda of Black and Minority Ethnic Achievement in order to ensure improved outcomes for all minority ethnic groups.
 - Duty to promote community cohesion places a responsibility for schools and the local authority to engage with all communities. Engagement of Gypsy, Roma and Irish Travellers needs to be within the broad framework of engagement of all minority ethnic groups, recognising that different groups may have different needs.

It is also proposed to review all Job Descriptions in the service to ensure they take account of the changing context in which the service is working. .

¹ Funding for one year for Assessment Coordinator for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People

5. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

- (a) Note the report for information
- (b) Receive a further report on the pilot of the Gypsy Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme

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