

**By:** Managing Director (Children, Families and Education)

**To:** Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Board – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2007

**Subject:** Improving educational outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children through commissioning services within the evolving arrangements for Local Children's Trusts in Kent

**Classification:** Unrestricted – for information

---

**Summary:** This report updates members on development of arrangements for improving outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children through commissioning services within the evolving arrangements for Local Children's Trusts in Kent.

---

## **Background**

### **1.1 DCSF: Positive Pathways Statement July 2006**

In July 2006 the Department for Schools, Children and Families set out an agenda for the future for Local Authorities 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.
- 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.

### **1.2 Guiding principles for Kent Local Children's Trusts**

As part of the development of Children's Trust arrangements in Kent the Local Children's Trust Reference Group and the Children's Trust Board have endorsed three guiding principles relating to the developments in Kent. They are:

- Streamlined and highly strategic county arrangements with a key focus on commissioning improved outcomes for children and young people;
- Presumption in favour of decision making at the most local level that is consistent with excellent performance (outcomes for children) and value for money (quality and infrastructure).
- A focus on early intervention and preventative services for children, young people and families.

### **1.3 Children's Services Grant**

Specialist services to promote access to education (and raise achievement for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children) are currently funded through the Children's Services Grant. In 2007/8 Kent committed £626k Children Services Grant through the Minority Communities Achievement Service on specialist posts to support achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families. Confirmation has yet to be received of the level of funding through the Children's Services Grant for 2008/9 for this area of work.

#### **1.4 Attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in Kent**

Analysis of the end of Key Stage Assessments in 2006 shows that Gypsy Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage are the lowest attaining minority ethnic group (see Appendix 1). This reflects the national position. Analysis also shows that the rates of progress made by Gypsy Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage between key stages are not closing the gap in attainment and indicates that it is widening as children progress through education.

Although significant progress has been made in supporting access to education there is still substantial concern relating to the attainment gap between all Kent children and Gypsy, Roma and Travellers. Future action needs to be in the context set out in 1.1 and 1.2 above.

### **Framework for moving forward**

#### **2.1 Commissioning Group**

In March 2007 Children, Families and Education Senior Management Team established a multi-agency stakeholder group to steer the future commissioning of services currently delivered through the Minority Communities Achievement Service and the Specialist Teaching Services. A sub-group including representatives of schools, agencies, voluntary sector and the Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities is meeting to undertake a needs analysis, research effective practice, map existing provision, conduct consultation with the community on priorities and develop options for the future. This will be in the context of the development of Local Children's Trusts, the establishment of integrated teams, Contact Point and the Common Assessment Framework.

An interim report setting out the main findings from the group will be available early in 2008.

### **Recommendations**

**Members are asked to:**

- A) Note the report for information**
- B) Receive a further report in 2008 setting out options for future commissioning of services to secure improved outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families.**

**Officer details:**

**Joanna Wainwright, Director of Commissioning (Specialist Services)**

**Jenny Robson, Head of Service, Minority Communities Achievement Service**

**Ext 4509**