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**Tuarascáil ó Choiste Comhairliúcháin Phoiblí an tSeanaid –
An Lucht Siúil i dTreo Éire Níos Cothroime
Tar Éis Aitheantas a Fháil**

Eanáir 2020

**Seanad Public Consultation Committee Report on Travellers
Towards a More Equitable Ireland Post-Recognition**

January 2020

Note on Artistic Contributors to this Report

Report Cover Illustration

The Report cover illustration is titled “Horse & Harness” by Ms. Leanne McDonagh.

Leanne is a young Traveller woman who began practicing art at Crawford College of Art & Design in 2007 and graduated with an Honours Degree in Fine Art as well as a Higher Diploma in Art & Design Education. As a visual artist she feels she has a unique opportunity to represent and record her community from within.

The “Horse & Harness” illustration “captures an intersection of the fair where all the dealing takes place, a place where the young and old gather and where the traditional and modern combine amongst the hustle and bustle that truly is the essence of the fair”. Cahirmee horse fair 2014 c LMCD.

<http://leannemcdonaghart.com/>

Graphic Recording (on pages 3, 18 and 25)

Graphic Recording, also referred to as Visual Scribing or Graphic Harvesting, is a method of visualising information.

Ms. Hazel Hurley, an independent graphic recorder, attended the Seanad Public Consultation Committee hearings. She listened to and observed the witnesses and the ideas being presented and she then translated these into a concise visual representation using images and text.

Hazel is from Cork, after completing a BSc in International Development and Food Policy (BSc) she went on to study Graphic Design and Illustration, so she could tell important stories visually.

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Submissions received by the Committee are published separately to the Oireachtas website with this Report.

The official transcript of the meeting of the Committee on 9th July, 2019, is also published separately to the Oireachtas website with this Report.

Seanad Public Consultation Committee – Role and Membership

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The Seanad Public Consultation Committee was established by the Seanad in 2011 as a contribution to a broader process of reform and with a view to opening access to Seanad Éireann and its work. The Committee's purpose is to provide for direct engagement and consultation between members of the public and the Seanad through a process which involves inviting submissions from members of the public on a specific issue related to its legislative powers or an issue of public policy. The Committee considers submissions made to it, invites contributors to present to it at public hearings which are held in the Seanad Chamber and publishes a report for debate by the Seanad or referral to the relevant Oireachtas Joint Committee. The Committee has examined a range of broad socio-economic issues since it was established. These include the Rights of Older People; Prevention of Cancer through Lifestyle Changes; Ireland's Compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Farm Safety; Children's Mental Health Services; the Status, Treatment and Use of the National Anthem; and Small and Medium Sized Businesses in Ireland.

Members of the Seanad Public Consultation Committee



Chairman
Paul Coghlan
*Leas-Chathaoirleach
of the Seanad*



**Rapporteur
for this Topic**
Colette Kelleher
*Independent/
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Catherine Ardagh
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Jerry Buttimer
Fine Gael



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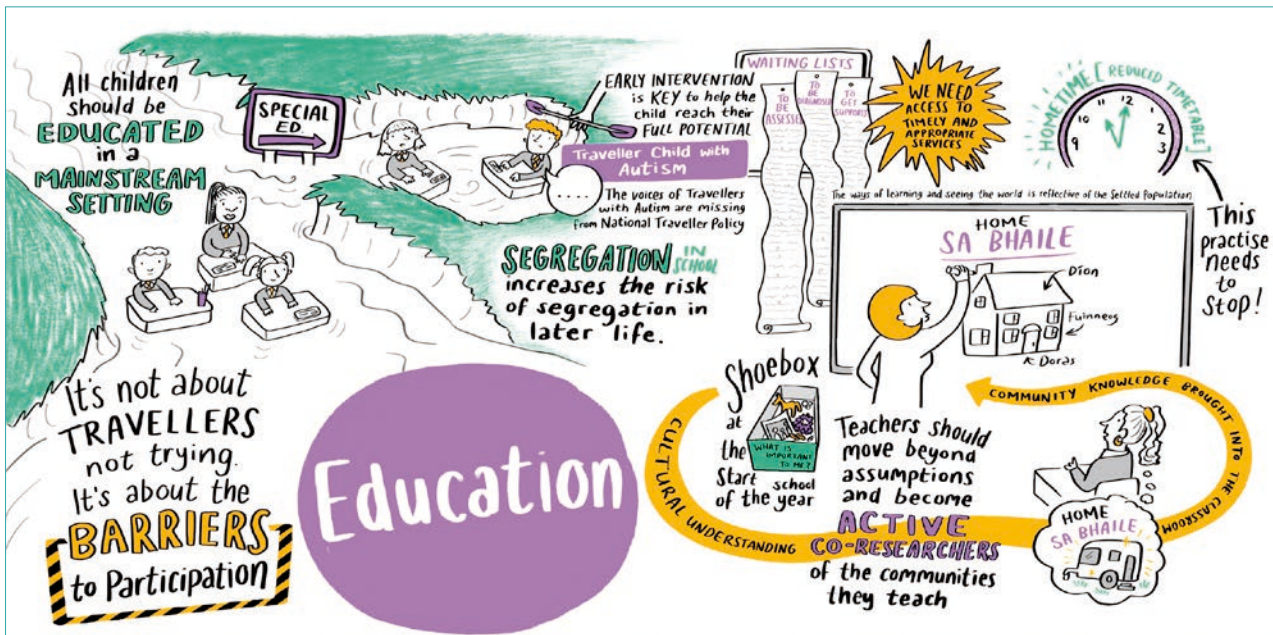
Máire Devine
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TRAVELLER PARTICIPATION AND POLITICS

Seanad Public Consultation Committee Hearings
JULY 2019



Gralti tome geels, a muni feins an
beoirs ar crush ain nesdes talosk
WELCOME GOOD PEOPLE, THE GOOD MEN AND
WOMEN WHO HAVE COME HERE TODAY.

We do not want
Tokenism



Of the 40,000
Travellers
in Ireland,
there are less
than 200
attending 3rd level

Encourage Travellers to participate in Education
DEMYSTIFY
THE
SYSTEM
Traveller
SPECIFIC
FINANCIAL
SCHOLARSHIP

EDUCATION
TO DRIVE
CHANGE!

Why do so
few Travellers
go to
college?

Education does not just
mean university education

BARRIERS
to going
to college
FINANCIAL
BARRIER
FEAR OF BEING
DISCRIMINATED
AGAINST
AS A TRAVELLER

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1. Overview

The 1st of March 2017, was a historic day for Irish society and for the Irish Traveller community. It marked the State's formal recognition of the ethnicity of Irish Travellers, beginning a new era of mutual understanding and relations between the Traveller community and the wider Irish society. Then Taoiseach, Deputy Enda Kenny, said *"Our Traveller community is an integral part of our society for over 1,000 years, with its own distinct identity – people within our people... recognition of Travellers could have a transformative effect on relations between Travellers and wider society..."*.

Despite the State's formal recognition of Traveller ethnicity and, by extension, language, culture and history, the everyday efforts that Travellers have to make to develop their identity and space within Irish society is yet to be recognised. Travellers are still experiencing stigma, longstanding prejudice, discrimination, racism, social exclusion and identity erosion. On 27 May, 2019, the Seanad Public Consultation Committee called for submissions with legislative, policy and other ideas to tackle these challenges¹. It was the first step in a Seanad Public Consultation Committee process entitled *"Travellers Towards a more Equitable Ireland Post-Recognition"*.

A total of 67 submissions were received², with each submission relating to one or both of the following two themes:

- Traveller Participation and Politics.
- Dialogue and Traveller Social Inclusion.

Following review of these submissions, the Seanad Public Consultation Committee invited members of the Irish Traveller community, including private citizens, representative organisations and other interested parties, to make oral presentations to the Committee³. The public hearings took place on 9 July, 2019.

The aim of the Seanad Public Consultation Committee was to consult with and listen to Travellers and others, and to explore proposals to support Travellers' full equality and make recommendations on the way forward. This Report brings together the themes and sub-themes which have emerged from the submissions and the oral presentations from the public hearings. It highlights the key challenges facing Travellers and makes specific recommendations on the basis of the consultation processes under the two key themes outlined above.

¹ Appendix 1

² Appendix 2

³ Appendix 3

2. Chairman's Preface



The State's formal recognition of the ethnicity of the Traveller community in Ireland on 1 March, 2017 was a significant moment. It gave acknowledgment and vindication to Travellers' unique customs and traditions and began a process of enhancing communication and understanding between Travellers and the majority population.

In light of this new era of State engagement, the Seanad Public Consultation Committee decided to reach out to, consult with, and listen to Travellers and others to consider proposals to support Travellers' full equality post-ethnicity and make recommendations on the way forward.

The Committee began this process in May 2019 when it called for written submissions from community groups and activists from the Traveller community. The level and breadth of the responses were outstanding and showed the passion of the groups and individuals from the Traveller community.

Public hearings organised under two themes were held in the Seanad Chamber on 9 July, 2019. The first theme focussed on "Traveller Participation and Politics", the second on "Dialogue and Traveller Social Inclusion".

The publication of this Report, including its recommendations, represents the final stage of the public consultation process.

Over the course of the public hearings, the Committee heard oral presentations from a variety of stakeholders from the Traveller community. Throughout all their submissions and presentations, one common theme emerged: "that despite formal ethnic recognition, there were still considerable hurdles in ensuring that Travellers are given an opportunity to have a satisfactory education, to be free from discrimination and feel a part of the wider Irish society".

The issue raised consistently throughout the public consultation process was around the lack of political representation for the Traveller community at local, national and international levels. Ms. Rosaleen McDonagh (Minceirs Whiden) was in attendance at the public hearings and spoke of her experience running for election to Seanad Éireann. Rosaleen sought election on four occasions and spoke about her lack of political and social connections and how it made it difficult to get support from within the Oireachtas. By placing herself in the public eye in running for election, she stated she was subjected to derogatory letters and calls about her gender, ethnicity and disability. Rosaleen, who is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and leading activist in the Traveller and disabled community, was recently conferred with a PhD from Newcastle University of Northumbria in England. Her thesis was entitled "From Shame to Pride, the Politics of Disabled Traveller Identity".

The consensus from other witnesses such as Mr. Martin Collins (Pavee Point) and Mr. Bernard Joyce (Irish Traveller Movement) was that decisive steps had to be taken to encourage members of the Traveller community to become engaged, through education and mentoring schemes, to allow them to build the necessary skills to enter into and thrive in politics. Ms. Ann Irwin and Ms. Rachel Doyle (Community Work Ireland) drew particular attention to the deficit of women in leadership roles within the Traveller community and suggested that measures be taken to encourage Traveller women to enter leadership positions in a similar way that measures have been taken to

encourage women in the majority population. This encompasses not just politics, but position in public sector bodies and in the community and volunteer sectors. The Committee has dedicated recommendations in the Report to address some of the challenges in this area.

Another key issue that was raised by witnesses was access to education and how Travellers are treated in formal education. Mr. Patrick McDonagh is currently pursuing a PhD at Trinity College Dublin and is the first in his family to go to university and one of a tiny minority of Travellers to pursue a doctorate. He highlighted the low percentage (less than 1%) of Travellers that have gone on to third-level education, fewer than 200 in all. The Committee's recommendations recognise the importance of supporting and resourcing education for Travellers at all levels.

Ms. Minnie Connors (Wexford Traveller Development Group) spoke about the level of discrimination she felt as a student in primary school in Wexford. She left school at the age of 12 without being able to read or write. Her own children now attend the same school as she did and face the same level of discrimination. Minnie outlined that on their first day, her children were appointed a special needs assistant and were assigned different class work from the other students. The effect of this is that by being treated differently by teachers, their peers see them as different.

Ms. Connors also raised the harrowing issue of suicide within the Traveller community and within her own family. Suicide accounts for over 10% of all Traveller deaths.

Access to mental health services, as well as to healthcare generally, is a major issue for Travellers. Ms. Kathleen Sherlock (Minceirs Widen) described how over 70% of Travellers were under the age of 35 with very few making it into their 70's compared to an average life expectancy of 82 for members of the majority population.

Employment plays a huge role in the ability of people to access healthcare services and medication. Within the Traveller community, Ms. Sherlock stated that the unemployment rate stands at 80.2%, which is in sharp contrast to the general population rate. Mr. Martin Collins described these discrepancies as "manifestations of individual and institutional anti-Traveller discrimination in our society".

These represent just some of the challenges that are faced by members of the Traveller community on a daily basis and this Report and its recommendations strive to propose solutions to alleviate some of the factors that contribute towards them.

Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality, Deputy David Stanton, who has special responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration, was also in attendance at the public hearings. The Minister is also Chair of the Steering Committee of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS). This whole-of Government Strategy was launched in June 2017 with the aim of improving the lives of Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland. The Committee heard that for the Traveller community to begin to heal and move towards greater social inclusion, their basic needs must be addressed. A key recommendation of this Report is to progress implementation of the actions of the NTRIS and to ensure that all actions are taken in full consultation with Traveller and Roma organisations. I welcome Minister Stanton's commitment at the public hearings to ensure the recommendations of this Report will be included on the agenda of the NTRIS Steering Committee.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who sent in written submissions to the Committee. I would particularly like to pay tribute to the Traveller representatives who so eloquently and powerfully represented their causes.

Their insights, experience and passion in pursuing the betterment of conditions and of the rights of the Traveller community, while at times tragic and difficult to hear, proved invaluable to the Committee as it made its considerations. I particularly wish to thank those that spoke about difficult personal circumstances and those of their families and friends. Their bravery in the face of these circumstances are a testament to the resilience of the Traveller community.

I would like to pay particular tribute to Senator Colette Kelleher for proposing this topic for discussion and for acting as Rapporteur in the drafting of this Report, which was adopted by the Committee at its meeting on 18th December, 2019. Colette advocates tirelessly on behalf of Travellers' rights and on building better understanding and respect between the settled and Traveller communities and is to the forefront in bringing this issue to greater prominence at national level in this Seanad and Dáil. She was instrumental in the establishment in 2019 of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community and was appointed Chair of that Committee, where she continues her work in this area.

I would also like to thank all the members of the Committee for their engagement and input throughout this public consultation process. I also acknowledge the staff of the Seanad Office for their work in managing the consultation process.

As illustrated throughout this public consultation process, regrettably social prejudice continues to prevent Travellers from playing their full role in society. Time and time again, the Traveller representatives outlined that the Traveller community basically want what everyone else wants, equality, justice, education, employment, to be able to live with dignity and have the ability to provide for themselves and their families. While it is evident that some progress is being made, we still have a lot of work to do to improve outcomes across the board for the Traveller community.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee strongly reiterates that there is absolutely no room in Irish society for any kind of prejudice, discrimination or racism against any ethnic group. I therefore hope that by the publication of this Report and the implementation of its recommendations that we can continue the journey of building a more equal society in Ireland for Travellers and contribute to breaking down the barriers that so far have halted this process. I hope the recommendations will be taken on board by the Government. I request that the Report be debated in Seanad Éireann and I look forward to engaging further with the Minister during this debate.



Senator Paul Coghlan

Leas-Chathaoirleach of the Seanad and Chairman of the Committee

January, 2020

3. Rapporteur's Preface



Travellers have long been part of Ireland, with a distinct history and culture, a “people within a people”. It was only on 1 March, 2017, that this distinct ethnicity was officially recognised by the Irish State by the then Taoiseach Enda Kenny, TD. Therefore, after decades of assimilationist policies with devastating consequences for Travellers still felt today, the Irish State acknowledged Travellers as a minority ethnic group.

On the night of this joyous occasion when the announcement of recognition was made in Dáil Éireann, the Taoiseach spoke about it being a catalyst for “a new era of mutual understanding and relations”.

More than two years on from the historic and hugely symbolic recognition, little tangible difference has happened to transform Travellers’ lives for the better.

This Seanad public consultation on “Travellers Towards a more equitable Ireland Post-Recognition” presented a timely opportunity to publicly consult with Travellers and others to gauge where things stand, particularly in relation to “Traveller Participation and Politics” and “Dialogue and Traveller Social Inclusion”.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee received 67 submissions, a record number and overwhelmingly from Travellers and Traveller organisations, as well as from other interested parties. A selection of people were invited to and made presentations to the Committee in a day of hearings devoted to the issues raised in writing.

The submissions and presentation transcripts make for challenging reading. Life for members of the Traveller community in Ireland today is hard and a struggle. It is one where daily experiences of harsh words, hate speech, racism, prejudice and discrimination is common. Compared to the majority population, Travellers experience huge disparities and inequalities in health and mental health. Many live in extremely inadequate accommodation and poverty, and have low levels of access to and progression in education with knock-on effects seen in access to jobs. It is virtually non-existent for Travellers to participate, represent or be visible in formalised national and local politics and public life, including in the upper echelons of the Civil Service or State Agencies. Travellers rarely have a seat at the table or a real say in the big decisions that affect them or their families, but are subject to a settled normative system where the dominant majority view holds the greatest authority.

In other words Travellers in Ireland experience social exclusion on a grand scale in almost every aspect of their lives. So if the historic recognition of Travellers as a minority ethnic group is to mean anything, we must listen to and heed their voices and others and make the necessary changes towards an Ireland where Travellers can thrive and prosper.

The public consultation generated many recommendations on how a more equitable Ireland can be achieved and which must be met with a corresponding desire for real change and be implemented by Government and others.

Reserving a seat at the political table, specifically in the Seanad, was a key and consistent recommendation, as was the need for quotas including ones for Traveller women to redress the great disparities in participation and influence. Paid internship for members of the Traveller community to open up the Civil Service and other bodies was proposed. Anti-discriminatory Traveller awareness training taking account of conscious and unconscious bias, particularly among professionals with whom Travellers interact on a daily basis, including in the education and health systems, was recommended.

Consistently the importance of introducing an ethnic identifier in line with international human rights standards was seen as a pivotal means to track and monitor the impact of State policies on Travellers, for good or ill. The need for sanctions and accountability on public bodies who fail Travellers and may be guilty of institutional racism was also proposed repeatedly with particular, though not exclusive, reference to local authorities who fail to spend and adequately provide Traveller accommodation, including Traveller-specific accommodation. It was recommended that the Seanad Public Consultation Committee note the report of the Expert Review Group on the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, when the report is published.

The formation of panels of Traveller experts for State boards, advisory and consultative fora was also recommended to ensure an informed perspective on development and implementation of key policies affecting Travellers. Resourcing voter education in Traveller communities and NGOs so that, and other capacity building, is on a secure financial footing was also highlighted as a key means for Traveller participation in politics.

Strong recommendations were made in the course of the public consultation to foster dialogue and Traveller social inclusion. Traveller culture and history needs to be known, taught, understood and respected. This knowledge and “cultural literacy” are particularly important for teachers in early, primary and post-primary levels. There was much support for the Traveller Culture and History in Education Bill 2018 to be progressed and passed into law. The development of a National Traveller Cultural Centre and Archive was recommended as well as regional hubs for learning Gammon and Cant, languages recognised by UNESCO. There were recommendations on the recognition of nomadism as a cultural expression and not a criminal activity. Action and activism by the State to tackle the racism experienced by Travellers head-on was called for with specific recommendations on developing a National Action Plan on Racism, with associated statutory powers when anti-Traveller sentiment is expressed by election candidates. New hate speech law was recommended as well as access to justice through legal aid and other measures for Travellers.

Those who made submissions and presentations spoke frequently of the impact of years of discriminatory policy made by Government and the very real and enduring effect on women, children and men, including those experiencing additional intersectional disadvantage for reasons including sexuality and disability. As well as the recommendations, there were calls for a State apology. From this public consultation it is clear that much hurt and hardship has been visited on the Traveller community. Implementing the recommendations in this Report fully, generously and in a timely fashion would go some way to make right the wrongs of the past and render Ireland a more equitable place for Travellers and all of us as citizens.

Many thanks to all who submitted and presented to the Seanad Public Consultation Committee. I welcome the support of Senator Paul Coughlan, Leas-Chathaoirleach, who chaired the proceedings, and all my fellow Seanad colleagues. I would also like to thank Bridget Doody, Carmel Considine, Carol Judge and all of the staff of the Seanad Office for their exceptional professionalism. Special thanks are particularly due to Jacinta Brack, Oein De Bhardúin, Hazel Hurley, Leanne McDonagh, Ben Meaney, Katriona O’Sullivan and Hannah Twomey, who were invaluable in developing this body of work and bringing this Report to its conclusion.

Yours sincerely



Senator Colette Kelleher

Rapporteur to the Seanad Public Consultation Committee on Travellers Towards a More Equitable Ireland Post-Recognition
January, 2020

4. Summary of Recommendations

THEME ONE – TRAVELLER PARTICIPATION AND POLITICS

Recommendations: Reserving a “Seat at the Political Table”

1. Reserve a seat in the Seanad for Travellers (Taoiseach’s nominee).
2. Introduce a Traveller quota system at all levels of the Oireachtas, in local democracy, in other decision-making fora and within the Civil and Public Service.
3. Introduce a paid Internship Scheme for Travellers in the Civil and Public Service.
4. Set targets for Traveller women in mainstream gender quotas, party political gender quotas and State agencies quotas.
5. Protect and increase resources for independent national and local Traveller organisations in respect of their work to support Traveller participation and towards broader social inclusion.

Recommendations: A Safe and Welcoming Political Environment for Travellers

6. Ensure Traveller anti-racism and intercultural awareness training is carried out across public, political and Government agencies and services, which prioritise those intersecting with Travellers in areas of health, mental health, education, social protection, housing and accommodation.
7. Political parties and candidates to sign up to and enforce anti-racist protocols.
8. Implement ethnic equality monitoring, including the rollout and implementation of an ethnic identifier (in line with the national census question) across all Government Departments and Statutory agencies to monitor access, participation and outcomes for Travellers and to inform the development of evidence-based policies and services.

Recommendations: A Say in Decisions which Impact on Travellers

9. Ensure that gender and other identities within the community are considered in all consultation platforms around decision-making and include the unique perspective of Traveller women, men, as well as LGBTI+ Travellers and Travellers with disabilities.
10. Consult with Travellers with autism and their families in the implementation and continued rollout of the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and in the development of an Autism Strategy.
11. Establish a Traveller Advisory Committee, develop panels and appoint Traveller representatives to State boards and authorities in the areas of media, housing and accommodation, health, employment and enterprise.

Recommendations: Political Education and Awareness for the Traveller Community

12. Instigate a publicly funded campaign to raise awareness of the importance of the political process for the Travelling community, including voter-education training.

THEME TWO – DIALOGUE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Recommendations: Respect for and Recognition of Traveller Identity

13. Establish a specific fund to support national and local arts and cultural endeavours to make visible Traveller culture and heritage and to support independent Traveller-specific cultural endeavours and dedicated community workers in the promotion and delivery of these events and activities.
14. Develop and resource a National Traveller Cultural Centre and Archive.
15. Develop and resource regional Traveller language hubs.
16. Recognise the centrality of nomadism for Traveller culture, including a review of criminal trespass legislation and implement the recommendations of the Expert Review of Traveller Accommodation upon publication of the report.
17. Establish a network of transient sites which would enable Travellers to be nomadic if they so wish.

Recommendations: Education

18. Publish and implement a comprehensive National Traveller Education Strategy at all levels, addressing all issues including the ending of reduced hours timetables and establishing second chance education and literacy training, which has adequate budgets and appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
19. Introduce education policy which produces a range of materials documenting:
 - (a) insights into Traveller cultural understanding; and
 - (b) ways in which schools need to fundamentally consider how formal school practices and a variety of cultural practices must be aligned.
20. Passing of the Traveller Culture and History in Education Bill 2018.

Recommendations: Inequality

21. Introduce a national Traveller Employment and Enterprise Strategy that addresses the high unemployment levels of Travellers and their exclusion from the wider labour market.
22. Establish and resource an Independent Traveller Accommodation Agency to oversee governance and delivery of Traveller accommodation.
23. Develop with ringfenced resources a national Traveller Mental Health Strategy, including mainstream Traveller-specific mental health services.
24. Publish as a matter of urgency and implement the National Traveller Health Action Plan, inclusive of clear targets, timeframes, indicators and budget lines, including the establishment of an institutional mechanism within the Department of Health and HSE to drive its delivery.
25. All Travellers employed in primary health care projects to be entitled to medical cards (similar to disability/ community service programme/CE) and that Travellers be prioritised for access to universal GP care.

Recommendations: Discrimination

26. Introduce hate speech legislation, where Travellers are named for specific protection.
27. Prioritise the development of an Anti-Racism National Action Plan and Monitoring Committee, explicitly inclusive of Travellers in its content and committee structures.
28. Appropriately resource Traveller organisations to undertake a national LGBTI+ Traveller campaign to support the promotion of LGBTI+ visibility, pride and identity within and external to the Traveller community.
29. Empower and resource Traveller organisations to have “legal standing” to carry out advocacy and representation in claims of discrimination and access to justice.
30. Ensure full cooperation across the public sector to eliminate discrimination against, and to uphold the human rights of, people using public services as per the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.
31. Name Travellers for specific protection under the Broadcasting Act and governance of the Press Council.

Recommendations: Accountability, Understanding and Healing

32. Acknowledgement of the impact of inequality, marginalisation and segregation caused by policies and actions and inactions of the State.
33. Development of a programme like the Citizen Traveller Campaign or a Citizens’ Assembly to develop dialogue between the settled community and Travellers.
34. Progress implementation of the National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS) through adequately resourced actions and implementation plans by all Government Departments involved, with the actions taken in full consultation with Traveller and Roma organisations. Strengthen the existing implementation and monitoring plan for NTRIS with clear targets, indicators, timeframes and budget lines.

5. Context

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee recognises that the historical attempts of the State to assimilate the Traveller community have harmed Travellers. State institutions have historically separated Travellers from the wider settled population through segregated public services, including Traveller-specific schools and training, health services and community welfare. Travellers' way of life had been harmed by the 1963 Report of the Commission on Itinerancy, and other State policies, and can be understood as institutional racism. This has led to mistrust and suspicion among Travellers towards the State. While recognition of Traveller ethnicity was intended to increase Travellers' sense of belonging in Irish life, the Seanad Public Consultation Committee process revealed that many Travellers' lives haven't improved since.

Travellers make up less than 1% of the population and as of 2016, there were 30,987 Irish Travellers resident in Ireland⁴. Although a small section of the population, equivalent to less than half the capacity of Croke Park on All Ireland final day, they experience higher levels of unemployment, homelessness and ill-health than the general community. 80.2% of Travellers are unemployed compared to 12.9%⁴ of the general population, and 13% of adults experiencing homelessness are Travellers⁵. Travellers' life expectancy is the equivalent to the life expectancy of the general population in the 1940's⁶, and Travellers are six times more likely to die by suicide than the national average⁵.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee process revealed a deepening national crisis within the Traveller community due to a lack of provision of culturally-appropriate Traveller accommodation, the escalation of suicide rates, chronic ill-health as a result of poverty and poor living conditions, unemployment, poor educational outcomes and high levels of social exclusion and racism experienced by the Traveller community. Travellers still fare worse than their peers in education. Travellers are still being affected by national policies which do not respect their distinct culture and history, including nomadism, and encounter hate speech through the media and online and, in some cases, physical and verbal abuse and intimidation.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee recognises the need for immediate action to address the inequality and racism experienced by the Traveller community, and the need to break down stereotypes and create awareness of the conscious and unconscious biases which exist in our State. The first part of this process is understanding the lived experience of the Traveller community and recognising the State's own failures. We must look to work together with the Traveller community through dialogue and respect. The Committee recognises that we must act decisively on the testimonials given by the Travellers who shared their life experiences in the Seanad Public Consultation process. All steps necessary must be taken to address the inequalities and inequities experienced by the Traveller community, including ensuring that all recommendations by the Seanad Public Consultation Committee for positive change are progressed.

⁴ CSO: *Census 2016*

⁵ Paul Murphy, RTÉ: *Life on the Fringes*, 2019

⁶ All Ireland Traveller Health Study Team UCD: *All Ireland Traveller Health Study*, 2010

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that Travellers continue to be invisible in most spheres of public life. As a result of being historically excluded in society for so long, Travellers have not been supported or enabled to be part of political life and have been deprived of the opportunity to play their full part in shaping Irish society. Travellers are and feel separate and excluded in the political process. There are no Travellers in this Government, no Travellers as elected representatives and no Travellers in this Dáil or Seanad. There are no self-identified Traveller in the upper levels of the Civil Service or other parts of Irish public life. There have been no targeting measures or quotas to address this. In the context of having a more diverse, equitable and fairer society that represents all the people on this island, we now have the opportunity to show political leadership within our political system by addressing these issues.

6. Key Information

These statistics were cited in the submissions and presentations.

Life expectancy

73.3% of Travellers are under the age of 35 years.⁴

3% of Travellers were aged 65 or over in 2016 compared with 13.3% of the general population.⁴

134 excess Traveller deaths per year compared to the general population.⁶

Life expectancy for Traveller men is 15.1 years less than men in the general population.⁶

Life expectancy for Traveller women is 11.5 years less than women in the general population.⁶

Employment

80.2% of Travellers are unemployed.⁴

Travellers are 19 times more likely to be non-employed compared to the general population.⁷

43% of Travellers have experienced discrimination when accessing employment.⁸

Only 1 in 10 non-Travellers said they would employ a Traveller.⁸

Travellers are 10 times more likely to experience discrimination when looking for work than non-Travellers.⁹

Percentage population

Travellers make up just over 0.7% of the general population.⁴

Mortality and Suicide

Suicide rate in male Travellers is 6.6 times higher than the general population.⁶

Suicide accounts for 11% of all Traveller deaths.⁶

Infant mortality rate is 3.6 times higher than the national average.⁶

Traveller mortality is almost 3.5 times higher than the general population.⁶

82% of Travellers have been affected by suicide.⁸

Racism and Discrimination

Travellers were over 22 times more likely to report discrimination in private services than White Irish.⁹

56% of Travellers surveyed reported experiencing discrimination in getting accommodation.⁶

18.2% of people surveyed would deny Irish citizenship to Travellers.¹⁰

Education

57% of Traveller boys had only primary-level education compared to 13% of the rest of the population.⁴

13% of Traveller females were educated to upper secondary or above compared with 69.1% of the general population.⁴

One-quarter of working age Travellers have no formal education.⁷

55% of Travellers overall had left school by the age of 15.¹¹

Travellers are over 50 times more likely to leave school without the Leaving Certificate.⁷

Less than 1% of Travellers are in third-level education. 167 Travellers hold a third-level qualification.⁴

Incarceration

Travellers represent 5% of the prison population.¹²

Traveller men are between 5-11 times more likely than other men to be imprisoned.¹²

Traveller women are between 18-22 times more likely to be imprisoned than the general population.¹²

Accommodation and Homelessness

12% of Travellers live in a caravan or mobile home.⁷

39.1% of Traveller households had more persons than rooms compared with less than 6% of all households.⁴

20% of Travellers own their home compared to 67.6% of the general population.⁴

25% of homeless children living in emergency accommodation outside of Dublin are Travellers.⁵

13% of adults living in emergency accommodation outside of Dublin are Travellers.⁵

Only 24% of Travellers have internet access compared to 82% of the general population.⁷

Of Travellers who are renting their homes, 65.5% are renting from a local authority.⁴

There was an overall 48% under-spend in traveller accommodation budget by local authorities in 2018.¹³

Mental Health

42% of LGBTI+ Travellers surveyed had a history of self-harm within the previous year and a total of 33% had suicide ideation and enactment within the previous year. A total of 83% of these stated this had a direct relationship with their LGBTI+ identity.¹⁴

9% of Travellers aged 35-54 years have a psychological or emotional disability, compared to 3% of their non-Traveller counterparts.⁷

Health

At all ages, Travellers are more likely to experience poor health than non-Travellers. There is a sharper decrease in poor health with age for Travellers.⁷

In the 35-54 age group, Travellers are about 3 times more likely to have poor health or some type of difficulty or disability in comparison with non-Travellers.⁷

⁴ CSO: Census 2016

⁵ Paul Murphy, RTÉ: *Life on the Fringes*, 2019

⁶ All Ireland Traveller Health Study Team UCD: *All Ireland Traveller Health Study*, 2010

⁷ ESRI: *A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland*, 2017

⁸ The National Traveller Data Steering Group /Community Foundation for Ireland: *National Traveller Community Survey*, 2017

⁹ IHREC: *Who experiences discrimination in Ireland*, Research Series 2017

¹⁰ Micheál Mac Gréil: *Emancipation of the Travelling People*, 2010

¹¹ CSO: Census 2011

¹² Irish Penal Reform Trust: *Travellers in the Irish Prison System: A qualitative study*, 2014

¹³ Cónal Thomas, *Journal.ie*: <https://jml.ie/4503701>, 2019

¹⁴ Clondalkin Traveller Development Group Survey, 2012

7. Theme One – Traveller Participation and Politics



“Travellers ask me and others if our representation holds any value, or worse. After all these years, we have had poor outcomes from our participation and this can undermine Traveller participation. Are we actually colluding with the State and being dominated by non-Travellers in respect of the status quo? The political system until now has not created mechanisms to confirm the voice of Travellers, as it has done with gender quotas. We must be proactive in changing the system.”

Bernard Joyce

Irish Traveller Movement

Overview

The submissions and presentations under this theme outlined the detrimental effect that lack of political representation has on the daily lives of the Traveller community, as well as their political aspirations. Since the foundation of the State, there has been no national Traveller political representation. Travellers continue to be largely invisible within the political establishment. Dr. Sindy Joyce was recently appointed to the Council of State which was a significant and symbolic development and was welcomed. The written submissions and presentations recognised that much work is needed to strengthen political representation of Travellers and the need for a more radical approach.

Several key concerns and issues emerged from the written submissions and the presentations to the Seanad Public Consultation Committee, including –

- Reserving a “Seat at the Political Table”.
- A safe and welcoming political environment for Travellers.
- A real say on decisions which impact on Travellers.
- Political education and awareness for the Traveller community.

In the written submissions and presentations, lack of Traveller political representation was raised frequently, as well as proposals on how to create a safe political environment and culture in which the Traveller community can engage. Ways in which the Traveller community could be supported to increase representation in the political system were put forward.

The written submissions and presentations highlighted the intersectional challenges that many in the Traveller community face. Aside from the discrimination and struggles that Travellers face, many, such as women, the LGBTI+ community and Travellers with disabilities, face additional biases and challenges. The Seanad Public Consultation Committee acknowledges the need to address specific additional challenges facing groups in this intersectional space.

Issues arising

Reserving a “Seat at the Political Table”

A large number of written submissions and presentations emphasised the importance of increasing the visibility and participation of Travellers in politics and that public policy be developed with the voice and needs of Travellers included. Travellers want to be included in politics. Due to historic discrimination, they have been excluded. They need support to get a “seat at the table”.

A consistent recommendation which emerged during the public consultation process was to reserve a seat in the Seanad for a Traveller.

“We need to explore the concept of reserved seats, which is a tried and trusted method of supporting the inclusion of indigenous groups across Europe... Travellers need to see their faces reflected in the Houses of the Oireachtas. If that were to happen, it would deconstruct the notion that our Parliament is the sole preserve of the majority population”.

Martin Collins, Pavee Point.

Many of the written submissions and presentations, although supportive of a reserved seat in the Seanad for a Traveller, highlighted that Travellers need to be represented in all levels of decision-making, including in Dáil Éireann, in bodies such as the Citizens’ Assembly and Constitutional Conventions, and across all levels of the Civil Service. The most frequent method proposed for doing this was the implementation of a quota system. This view was put forward by representatives from several Traveller organisations, by individual Travellers and by academics working in this area.

“We do not want simply to have one Seanad seat, however. We need Travellers to be represented where the political decisions are being made and that is in local and national government... Without a doubt, there is no community in Ireland that has been as negatively affected by political decisions and indecision as the Traveller community. We need positive discrimination and we need seats to be allocated for Travellers.”

Kathleen Sherlock, Minceirs Whiden.

In the written submissions and presentations, it was frequently cited that Travellers need to be part of mainstream social inclusion initiatives and to have specific “seats” allocated. With the introduction of a quota system, employment opportunities could be opened up for Travellers in all Government Departments. This would increase the visibility of Travellers within all levels of the Civil Service and change the make-up of the Civil Service itself.

Many submissions and presentations noted that Traveller-specific initiatives such as funded training and internship programmes, across State and civil society organisations and in Government Departments, could further support the employment opportunities of Travellers, while challenging racism, prejudice and negative stereotypes within civic structures.

“...the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection to direct the establishment of a paid internship scheme across public bodies by directly targeting Travellers... One can say that it is open to everybody and continue to make those claims but without clear policies that are putting in place a pathway, that is still not going to happen”.

Kevin Burn, Exchange House.

It was cautioned that these methods of political participation may not meet the needs of Travellers who occupy an intersectional space. The National Traveller Women's Forum noted the need to examine the intersection of ethnic disadvantage, discrimination and racism, experienced by women and as Travellers, to ensure that the multiple forms of discrimination and racism are addressed.

“The needs of Traveller women may not be met by the responses and strategies designed to confront and tackle gender inequality or ethnic discrimination alone...Breaking through the glass ceiling on gender equality is even further out of the reach of Traveller women than it is for other women in Ireland”.

Maria Joyce, National Traveller Women's Forum.

Traveller women experience significant exclusion from decision-making and wider political processes due to discrimination and marginalisation and there is a real urgency to reduce the distance for Traveller women from places of power and decision-making. Many submissions and presentations recommended that mainstream gender quotas, party political gender quotas and State agency gender quotas include Traveller women in their targets.

“I ran as an independent candidate four times for election to the Seanad. Although I was generally warmly and well received, for me as a Traveller, the atmosphere was hostile. I did not have the social connections or political mobility to find support in the Oireachtas. As a result, I was at a huge disadvantage.”

Rosaleen McDonagh, Minceirs Whiden.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee recognises the importance of independent national and local Traveller organisations in respect of their work to support Traveller participation and towards broader social inclusion. Many written submissions and presentations highlighted the historic and current lack of adequate support from the State on issues affecting Travellers. Traveller organisations often led, implemented and fought for policy change, procedures and supports that are positively impacting the Traveller community today. It was noted across submissions and presentations that the lack of Government supports and funding for independent national and local Traveller organisations is preventing them from reaching all those who need supports. In a written submission by Pavee Point, it was recommended that the State should *“ensure meaningful consultation with Traveller organisations and enhance their role in developing and monitoring policy responses to Traveller developments”*.

Recommendations

1. Reserve a seat in the Seanad for Travellers (Taoiseach's nominee).
2. Introduce a Traveller quota system at all levels of the Oireachtas, in local democracy, in other decision-making fora and within the Civil and Public Service.
3. Introduce a paid Internship Scheme for Travellers in the Civil and Public Service.
4. Set targets for Traveller women in mainstream gender quotas, party political gender quotas and State agencies quotas.
5. Protect and increase resources for independent national and local Traveller organisations in respect of their work to support Traveller participation and towards broader social inclusion.

A Safe and Welcoming Political Environment for Travellers

Most Travellers who submitted to the public consultation and who made presentations at the Seanad Public Consultation Committee hearings highlighted their direct experience of prejudice, of racism and of being marginalised by society and the political process. If Travellers are to aspire to full participation in the civil or political sphere, those spaces must be seen as “safe places” for Travellers. Travellers must be treated equally and fairly.

To combat exclusion and discrimination, it was consistently proposed in written submissions and presentations that all members of national and local Government and the Civil Service should undergo anti-discriminatory training in line with section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, particularly those who engage with Travellers or Traveller issues. In the written submission from Galway Traveller Movement, they highlighted that diversity training needs to take place across all agencies with the view to ensuring cultural competency.

Challenging discriminatory attitudes and practices is necessary to bring about positive change for Travellers. Discriminatory actions against Travellers should have consequences, such as sanctions on local authorities who fail to spend their allocated funding for Traveller accommodation or disciplinary measures for political parties or candidates who negatively target Travellers. There were repeated calls for enactment of measures to ensure Travellers would not be negatively targeted by political candidates in election campaigns. It was recommended that political parties and candidates should sign up to universal and robust anti-racist protocols and face disciplinary measures by political parties and others if these protocols are breached.

There were frequent calls for the implementation and roll-out of an ethnic identifier across all levels of Government and statutory agencies (in line with the national census) and Government-funded projects. An ethnic identifier, common across European States, would monitor Traveller inclusion in services and supports, and would allow for more effective planning and resourcing. It could provide monitoring of targeted strategies aimed at Travellers that currently lack comprehensive analysis of the uptake of or effective reachout to the community. The monitoring of access, participation and outcomes of Traveller-targeted strategies could inform the development of evidenced-based policies and services that engage more effectively with the Traveller community. The Seanad Public Consultation Committee recognises the call for equality of outcomes for the Traveller community and a need for these outcomes to be prioritised and monitored across all social policy areas.

Recommendations

6. Ensure Traveller anti-racism and intercultural awareness training is carried out across public, political and Government agencies and services, which prioritise those intersecting with Travellers in areas of health, mental health, education, social protection, housing and accommodation.
7. Political parties and candidates to sign up to and enforce anti-racist protocols.
8. Implement ethnic equality monitoring, including the rollout and implementation of an ethnic identifier (in line with the national census question) across all Government Departments and Statutory agencies to monitor access, participation and outcomes for Travellers and to inform the development of evidence-based policies and services.

A Real Say in Decisions which Impact on Travellers

Written submissions and presentations emphasised the importance of including Travellers voices and views in political and public decisions. As a result of being marginalised in society for so long, Travellers do not have a background in being part of the decision-making process and they often feel and are excluded. The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard strong calls for meaningful consultation with the Traveller community and with Traveller organisations. Financial barriers to full participation need to be addressed. There were calls to hear the voices of Travellers in the LGBTI+ community and from Travellers with autism.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that LGBTI+ Travellers experience discrimination as Travellers and as members of the LGBTI+ community. They face challenges including taboos, internal and external discrimination, lack of awareness, lack of discussion on sexuality, lack of information on sexual health, lack of accessible and culturally aware avenues of support and the likelihood that local organisations may have family members associated. These all greatly impact LGBTI+ Travellers. Across the written submissions and presentations, there were consistent calls to recognise and include the unique perspective of Travellers who exist in intersectional spaces including women, LGBTI+ Travellers and Travellers with disabilities.

Ms. Rose Marie Maughan who presented at the Seanad Public Consultation Committee public hearings, highlighted the urgency of discussing autism in the Traveller community and ensuring Travellers with autism of all ages have a voice in the development of national policy which directly impacts on their daily lives. Lack of awareness of Travellers with autism creates additional barriers, fears and frustrations. Travellers with autism and their families should be specifically consulted in the implementation and continued roll-out of the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 and in the development of an Autism Strategy.

“Autistic Traveller children and adults are part of the general autistic community, yet they are invisible. They have no real voice and are not even being heard”.

Rose Marie Maughan, Hearing Autistic Traveller Voices.

Throughout the public consultation process, the need to listen to Traveller voices was a resounding theme. Travellers need to feature in State decision-making processes and this participation should be visible and inclusive. All Travellers called for a formalised role in developing and monitoring policy responses to Traveller issues. Many asked for independent, national and local Traveller organisations to participate in policy decisions affecting them.

A number of written submissions and presentations outlined ways to achieve this. A consistent recommendation among written submissions and presentations was that a Traveller Advisory Committee be established and supported to assist the work of State partners and regulating bodies, including: the Rental Tenancies Board, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, RTÉ, the Press Council of Ireland, the Workplace Relations Commission, and Enterprise Ireland. This would ensure that Travellers' voices are heard throughout State Departments participating in all matters of potential relevance, including the work of the named organisations.

Recommendations

9. Ensure that gender and other identities within the community are considered in all consultation platforms around decision-making and include the unique perspective of Traveller women, men, as well as LGBTI+ Travellers and Travellers with disabilities.
10. Consult with Travellers with autism and their families in the implementation and continued roll-out of the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 and in the development of an Autism Strategy.
11. Establish a Traveller Advisory Committee, develop panels and appoint Traveller representatives to State boards and authorities in the areas of media, housing and accommodation, health, employment and enterprise.

Political Education and Awareness for the Traveller Community

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that discrimination, marginalisation and lack of representation in the political sphere has led to apathy towards engaging with politics among many in the Traveller community. Supporting Travellers to vote, to run for election and to participate in politics was consistently recommended across the written submissions and presentations. Mr. Patrick McDonagh, a PhD student in Trinity College Dublin and an Irish Traveller, advised that the State consider supporting efforts that raise awareness of the importance of political participation within the Traveller community. He mentioned the importance of education as a tool to demystify the system. Minceirs Whiden, among others, called for the delivery of Traveller-specific voter education training.

“The best way to strengthen Irish Traveller participation is through education... Once people enter the education system and become more aware of how the State operates, they become less mystified and more willing to effect change.”

Patrick McDonagh, PhD student in Trinity College Dublin.

Recommendation

12. Instigate a publicly funded campaign to raise awareness of the importance of the political process for the Travelling community, including voter-education training.

8. Theme Two – Dialogue and Traveller Social Inclusion



“Traveller life in Ireland is a constant daily struggle to be treated with respect and dignity like everybody else. It takes every ounce of our strength every day to battle against the feelings of shame and worthlessness that are heaped on us wherever we go.”

Minnie Connors

Wexford Traveller Development Group

Case Study

“I am a 40 year old Traveller woman. I was brought up in a trailer with my parents, five brothers and seven sisters. They were the happiest days of my life, living out in the open with our horses, dogs, chickens and goats, with all my extended family around me. Back then we lived without water, electricity or toilets. My extended family are now living on the same site I was raised on in four trailers, without water, electricity or toilets. Nothing has changed in a generation. I went to school in Wexford, to the same school that my five children have attended. When I left at the age of 12 I could not read or write. In Youthreach I learned to read and write in a few weeks.

The very same thing has happened to my children. They have been treated as children with special needs from day one. They do not get the same lessons as other children, do not learn Irish, do not get homework, and are told to colour in pictures and play computer games. They stay in at playtime to avoid discrimination. The same level of abuse and bullying is still there. If a child touched off me in school, they would have to touch off somebody else to get rid of the Traveller germ. A generation later, this is what my children experience every day.

When I had three children I was living happily in a caravan on the family site when council officials told me that if we did not leave, they would impound our caravan and I would have to go to a women’s refuge with my three children, and my husband Jim would have to go into a men’s hostel. Finding a landlord to rent to a Traveller family is near to impossible. The council offered the alternative of going into a council house, in a group housing scheme of ten houses built especially for Traveller families. All of the other Traveller families have been replaced by settled families and my family and I are now isolated on that scheme away from our own community.

I have had breast cancer. My GP did not examine me when I presented with a lump. He gave me antibiotics. I had to see five different doctors before I could get a mammogram. The cancer was then discovered. I still have to have the support of settled friends to get doctors to treat me properly as a person.

I am one of the 83% unemployed people in the Traveller community claiming social welfare. When I attended a social welfare appointment recently, the officer tried to get me to sign a document I had not read. It was a contract with Tús Nua to do a course I had already completed the previous year. When I asked for time to read it I was accused of pulling the Traveller card.

The committee is hearing from me today because my beautiful sister Alice took her own life last year. She was 24 years of age. She was the ninth suicide in my family in the last 30 years. Suicide in the Traveller community is seven to ten times higher than in the settled community.

Healthcare professionals do not understand Traveller culture. One counsellor I attended told me that she had never counselled a Traveller before and would need training to work with them. We all need culturally-appropriate mental health services. Our entire way of life is being stripped from us and we are still held in contempt by the settled community.

Traveller life in Ireland is a constant daily struggle to be treated with respect and dignity like everybody else. It takes every ounce of our strength every day to battle against the feelings of shame and worthlessness that are heaped on us wherever we go.

Recently I attended a party held for Syrian refugees hosted by the local council. It was so nice to see them welcomed and their culture being respected. I could feel the hurt and disrespect that I had felt throughout my life. Why can this same respect not be there for me and for my people?"

Minnie Connors

Wexford Traveller Development Group

Overview

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard of the many obstacles to developing and fostering inclusion, positive and productive working relationships between Travellers and wider society. The complexity of the relationship between the Traveller and settled community in Ireland is affected by a lack of contact and knowledge on the part of the settled community with Travellers. The extreme inequalities between both communities creates a power imbalance. Both communities are stakeholders in fostering understanding, consideration, and respect for each other's culture. Central to the idea of building new relationships between the wider community and the Traveller community is founding these relationships on respect for culture, identity and ethnic differences, and based on inclusion and equality.

Several key concerns and issues emerged from the written submissions and the presentations to the Seanad Public Consultation Committee including –

- Respect for and Recognition of Traveller Identity.
- Education.
- Inequality.
- Discrimination.
- Building Relationships and Healing.

Issues Arising

Respect for and Recognition of Traveller Identity

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee recognises that in order to participate and be included in social life in Ireland, Travellers must be acknowledged as citizens whose ethnicity is respected and understood. Marginalisation of the Traveller community by the State has contributed to identity erosion among Travellers whereby their language, culture and history has been misunderstood, written out of history and forgotten by the wider society.

A number of written submissions and presentations highlighted the importance of Traveller culture and identity being promoted and celebrated across the State. Recognising and acknowledging Traveller culture is a necessary step towards social inclusion. It was recommended that the State supports, through funding and facilitating both national and local endeavours celebrating Traveller culture, including initiatives led by independent Travellers or Traveller organisations. With the National Museum of Ireland recommending that a specific fund for Traveller culture creative projects be established in partnership with organisations such as the National Museum of Ireland.

“Our awareness of cultural appropriation and sensitivity to the imbalance of power between our institutions and traditionally marginalised voices is important... every effort is made to ensure members of the Traveller community lead our events about Traveller culture. No event will ever be held without their involvement. It is not enough to say that all are welcome.”

Lynn Scarff, National Museum of Ireland.

“For the Traveller, ethnic recognition has always been about respect and inclusion. It is about recognising Traveller culture and acknowledging the valuable contributions Travellers have made and continue to make to Irish society”.

Maria Joyce, National Traveller Women’s Forum.

Many written submissions and presentations called for a Traveller Cultural Centre to be established and funded. Written submissions and presentations varied in how the Traveller Cultural Centre would be structured, with some calling for a national cultural centre and others calling for multiple regional centres. Cork Travellers Women’s Network called for the development and resourcing of a National Traveller Archive to document, centralise and digitise Traveller cultural material currently held in Traveller projects. The development of a National Traveller Archive was supported by all who called for Traveller Cultural Centres, national or regional. There were calls for supports to assist the learning of the Traveller language (Gammon or Cant) with many supporting the idea of regional language hubs.

State recognition of nomadism and its centrality to Traveller identity was widely and consistently cited as necessary for Traveller social inclusion. Written submissions and presentations asked for the State to review policies relating to Traveller accommodation, and to take immediate steps to implement the recommendations of the Expert Review Group when its report is published. As it currently stands, section 24 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002 makes it illegal to trespass on land with an “object”, such as a caravan. This discriminates against Travellers, as it disproportionately impacts on the nomadic culture of Travellers in Ireland and has led to the *de facto* criminalisation of nomadism in Ireland. The Seanad Public Consultation Committee recognises the consistent calls in the public consultation process for a proper network of transient sites to be established which would enable Travellers to continue to be nomadic if they so wish.

Recommendations

13. Establish a specific fund to support national and local arts and cultural endeavours to make visible Traveller culture and heritage and to support independent Traveller-specific cultural endeavours and dedicated community workers in the promotion and delivery of these events and activities.
14. Develop and resource a National Traveller Cultural Centre and Archive.
15. Develop and resource regional Traveller language hubs.
16. Recognise the centrality of nomadism for Traveller culture, including a review of criminal trespass legislation and implement the recommendations of the Expert Review of Traveller Accommodation upon publication of the report.
17. Establish a network of transient sites which would enable Travellers to be nomadic if they so wish.

Education

In the written submissions and presentations Travellers' experience of education was described as a negative one, with their treatment and the opportunities available to them in the education system unequal to that of their peers in the settled community. Written submissions and presentations described the differentiated experiences and expectation of Travellers in the education system. For the majority of the general population there is an expectation that through education and gaining qualifications, people will secure access to quality employment. For Travellers this expectation is rarely met.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that given the high levels of discrimination and racism to which Travellers are subjected to in education, Travellers do not have the same access to employment. Lack of supports for and visibility of Travellers in the school system, including lack of taught Traveller culture and history, leads many Travellers to "drop out" of school. This combination of factors means Travellers may not experience the value of the education system as much as the general population. Second chance education and literacy training in some cases, were described as important bridges for many who may have left school early.

Effective employment activation supports, which consider the needs and skills within the Travelling community, including access to a wider range of education, employment, training and enterprise options, were proposed as solutions to workplace social exclusion. Pavee Point highlighted in their written submission that much of the 2006 Traveller Education Strategy has yet to be implemented and the advisory forum to oversee the implementation of the Strategy has not been convened since 2016. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive review of the Education Strategy, with the involvement of Traveller and Roma stakeholders as the Government committed to in the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS) action 11. There were calls for an education policy discourse on Traveller education outcomes that recognises the positive impact of Travellers on Irish life which does not start from a deficit position. This policy would encourage the availability of a range of materials documenting:

- (a) insights into Traveller cultural understanding;
- (b) ways in which schools need to fundamentally consider how formal school practices and a variety of cultural practices must be aligned.

“It is quite clear that the ways of learning and thinking about the world that are valued in our schools reflect the culture of the majority of the white settled population. We know the community wisdom and cultural literacy that Traveller children and young people have developed to negotiate their world are rarely used in their formal education. This places them at a systemic disadvantage.”

Karl Kitching, Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at UCC.

Several submissions and presentations said that this work could help in addressing the stigma, prejudice, discrimination, racism, social exclusion and identity erosion experienced by Travellers while helping to foster inclusion, dialogue and relationship building between Travellers and the wider community. Primary and post-primary teachers are a key group to develop greater cultural literacy about Travellers and their history and culture.

There was support, in many written submissions and presentations, for the introduction of a Traveller Culture and History in Education Bill, to provide a statutory basis to ensure that Traveller history and culture are included and taught in the formal curriculum for early years, primary and secondary schools.

Recommendations

18. Publish and implement a comprehensive National Traveller Education Strategy at all levels, addressing all issues including the ending of reduced hours timetables and establishing second chance education and literacy training, which has adequate budgets and appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
19. Introduce education policy which produces a range of materials documenting:
 - (a) insights into Traveller cultural understanding; and
 - (b) ways in which schools need to fundamentally consider how formal school practices and a variety of cultural practices must be aligned.
20. Passing of the Traveller Culture and History in Education Bill 2018.

Inequality

There are stark inequalities between the Traveller community and the general population. In order to foster greater inclusion and dialogue these inequalities need to be addressed and redressed. Whilst all groups in society face challenges as a result of economic and industrial change, for Travellers these challenges have been significantly compounded, in the context of their lifelong experiences of deprivation, discrimination and marginalisation by the State.

“The circumstances of the Irish Travelling people are intolerable. No humane and decent society, once made aware of such circumstances, could permit them to persist”.

Traveller Counselling Service (quote extract from ESRI, July 1986, Paper No. 131).

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that the rate of unemployment amongst Travellers is extremely high, at 80.2% and is indicative of major exclusion and barriers to accessing mainstream employment. The Committee heard that Travellers are more likely to work in unskilled (or elementary) occupations and only 1% of Travellers gain access to higher education. Furthermore, Travellers are 10 times more likely than their settled peers to experience discrimination in seeking work. Written submissions and presentations recommended that a National Traveller Employment and Enterprise Strategy be developed that would address the high unemployment rate among Travellers, and their exclusion from the wider labour market.

Written submissions and presentations described how Travellers are significantly and disproportionately impacted by the current housing crisis in Ireland. It was heard that 25% of homeless children living in emergency accommodation outside of Dublin are Travellers, as are 13% of homeless adults. The Seanad Public Consultation Committee recognises that everyone should have appropriate accommodation in which they can live in safety and with dignity. This must include adequate waste management and accessible electricity and water supplies. Written submissions and presentations called for sanctions to be placed on public authorities that fail to draw down and appropriately spend the allocations for Traveller accommodation.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that laws limiting informal sites have been enforced, yet the legal obligation to provide Traveller-specific accommodation has repeatedly been flouted. There is a national as well as a local government responsibility in this regard. Written submissions and presentations recommended that the establishment of an independent agency to deliver Traveller accommodation, with national monitoring and oversight panels, would ensure delivery of Traveller accommodation.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that the current Travellers' mental health crisis hinders the capacity of the community to fully engage with social and political participation. Travellers are experiencing significant mental health issues. Causal factors include racism, social exclusion, identity erosion, sexuality, addiction, and socio-economic issues such as unemployment, lack of appropriate accommodation and homelessness and poor access to education. Therefore, mental health issues for Travellers have to be responded to within the context of both Traveller-specific issues, mental health issues and the interaction of both, making it complex to address and tackle. It was recommended, across the written submissions and presentations, that Traveller-specific mental health services be established and supported to address the current mental health crisis in the Traveller Community.

“One counsellor I attended told me that she had never counselled a Traveller before and would need training to work with them. We all need culturally-appropriate mental health services. Our entire way of life is being stripped from us and we are still held in contempt by the settled community.”

Minnie Connors, Wexford Traveller Development Group.

The written submissions and presentations highlighted the major health inequalities facing the Traveller community and there are stark inequalities for Travellers in relation to access, participation and outcomes in health. The All Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS) revealed the following results for Travellers in comparison to the general population: 134 excess Traveller deaths per year, life expectancy for Travellers born today is 15.1 years lower for men and 11.5 years lower for women than the general population and infant mortality rate is 3.7 times higher. Although many written submissions and presentations welcomed the development of the National Traveller Health Action Plan, as per Action 73 of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS), the Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that the plan needs to be progressed as a matter of urgency and updated to include the establishment of an institutional mechanism to drive its delivery.

The written submissions and presentations raised the important work of Traveller Community Health Workers (CHWs) who provide primary health care to the Traveller community. Primary healthcare projects have proven to be an effective approach in bridging the gap between a community experiencing high health inequalities and a health service unable to reach and engage that community effectively in health service provision. It was also highlighted that the primary healthcare project approach has been proven internationally as an effective method of engaging and including minority ethnic groups in health service provision. The Seanad Public Consultation Committee recognises that Traveller CHWs come from the Traveller community and that they and their families experience similar levels of health inequalities to

the overall Traveller community. It was recommended that Travellers employed in primary healthcare projects be entitled to a medical card in recognition of the important work of those in primary healthcare projects, as well as prioritisation of Travellers for access to universal GP care to begin to bridge the gap between the Traveller community and the Health Service.

Recommendations

21. Introduce a national Traveller Employment and Enterprise Strategy that addresses the high unemployment levels of Travellers and their exclusion from the wider labour market.
22. Establish and resource an Independent Traveller Accommodation Agency to oversee governance and delivery of Traveller accommodation.
23. Develop with ringfenced resources a national Traveller Mental Health Strategy, including mainstream Traveller-specific mental health services.
24. Publish as a matter of urgency and implement the National Traveller Health Action Plan, inclusive of clear targets, timeframes, indicators and budget lines, including the establishment of an institutional mechanism within the Department of Health and HSE to drive its delivery.
25. All Travellers employed in primary health care projects to be entitled to medical cards (similar to disability/ community service programme/CE) and that Travellers be prioritised for access to universal GP care.

Discrimination

Discrimination was described as a common and everyday experience by many of those who made written submissions and presentations. The lived and common experience of most Travellers who made the submissions and who presented to the Seanad Public Consultation Committee was one of prejudice, racism and a society that accepts and endorses hate speech. Many written submissions and presentations said that for inclusion to happen, Travellers need to see that the State is taking a stand against hate-speech.

“Following a story of a Traveller family in need of accommodation there were comments like ‘inbreeding does not make you a race sweetheart...’, ‘Burn them out’, ‘Just bring in a tank of slurry and start spraying’, ‘bring them to the shooting range-good target practice for our boys in green’ and ‘a few litres of petrol and a match will sort them out’.”

Brigid Carmody, Cork Travellers Women’s Network.

To protect the Traveller community from discrimination and racism there were consistent calls for the renewal of the National Action Plan Against Racism and the immediate implementation of hate speech legislation, where Travellers are named for specific protection. The State was encouraged to bring all policies in line with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, and to end discriminatory policies such as the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002. Many submissions and presentations called for the publication of the review of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 and called for any new or revised legislation to address online hate speech. The development of a new National Anti-Racism Strategy was consistently called for, to ensure that equality issues for the Traveller community are made mainstream. It was recommended that the plan include a monitoring committee, explicitly inclusive of Travellers in its content and structures.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that the continued discrimination of the Traveller community in Irish society is not in accordance with an open, inclusive democracy and is inconsistent with the recommendations of the advisory committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the views and recommendations made by a former Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. These international bodies noted that the Irish State has not adopted positive action measures to improve the representation of Travellers in political institutions and decision-making.

Mr. Oein De Bhardúin, of the National LGBTI+ Traveller and Roma Action Group, highlighted the concerning statistics on the standards of mental health among LGBTI+ Travellers.

- In 2012, 42% of the LGBTI+ Travellers surveyed had a history of self-harm within the previous year.
- A total of 33% had suicide ideation and enactment within the previous year.
- A total of 83% of these stated this had a direct relationship with their LGBTI+ identity.

It was consistently recommended across the written submissions and presentations that a national LGBTI+ Traveller and Roma awareness campaign, inclusive of Traveller organisations, community groups and primary health networks, be developed and supported. This campaign would include avenues for Travellers who live outside of these networks to be included, supported and led by LGBTI+ Traveller voices.

The submission from Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC) highlighted the inequality in access to justice for Travellers, highlighting unmet legal needs as a distinct area that is integral to meeting social inclusion goals. In the context of hate speech and racism, individual Travellers do not often have the capability or means to defend themselves and make legal challenges. FLAC recommended that bodies that are representative of the Traveller community should be given standing to initiate proceedings on behalf of victims of discrimination and that these organisations should be adequately resourced to carry out advocacy and representation in claims of discrimination.

“...we were very struck by the level and extent of unmet legal need that Travellers experience, particularly in housing, standards of accommodation, evictions and discrimination in access to good and services, including licensed premises. We believe access to justice is essential to addressing the unmet legal need and is integral and essential for social inclusion”.

Eilis Barry, Free Legal Aid Centres (FLAC).

Written submissions and presentations described challenging engagements between Travellers and State agencies, where members of the Traveller community experience discrimination, are sometimes automatically refused benefits or disbelieved by medical professionals, and often have to go through long and laborious appeal processes. Within the health system, Traveller issues are often disbelieved or belittled. Mr. Denis Robinson described how he observes Travellers being treated differently than settled people, even in a community where Travellers are in the majority. Under the requirements of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, public bodies are required to assess and address human rights and equality issues relevant to the functions and purpose of the body and to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of those to whom they provide services and carry out their daily work.

“...engagement between Travellers and State agencies is always a source of contention for people in the community. Members of the Traveller community are afraid they will lose benefits and feel they are not believed”.

Denis Robinson, West Limerick Resources and UCC Doctoral Candidate.

Many written submissions and presentations highlighted the need to regulate the media, and social media. The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that Travellers were, and often still are, presented in the media as subjects of news rather than being visible throughout mainstream broadcast materials as commentators or presenters who influence the narrative. A key recommendation was to name Travellers for specific protection under the Broadcasting Act and governance of the Press Council. This would improve the accuracy and fairness in relation to programmes and reporting on the Traveller community. Furthermore, newspapers and radio stations that broadcast their news online and through social media, should be obliged to pre-moderate comments on their pages and remove hate speech and racist comments.

Recommendations

26. Introduce hate speech legislation, where Travellers are named for specific protection.
27. Prioritise the development of an Anti-Racism National Action Plan and Monitoring Committee, explicitly inclusive of Travellers in its content and committee structures.
28. Appropriately resource Traveller organisations to undertake a national LGBTI+ Traveller campaign to support the promotion of LGBTI+ visibility, pride and identity within and external to the Traveller community.
29. Empower and resource Traveller organisations to have “legal standing” to carry out advocacy and representation in claims of discrimination and access to justice.
30. Ensure full cooperation across the public sector to eliminate discrimination against, and to uphold the human rights of, people using public services as per the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.
31. Name Travellers for specific protection under the Broadcasting Act and governance of the Press Council.

Building Relationships and Healing

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee heard that the recognition of ethnicity does not eradicate the trauma that some Travellers encounter and feel. To ensure that the recognition of Traveller ethnicity is more than symbolic, positive measures could be taken to celebrate Traveller culture and build positive relationship with society and the State. When attempting to develop and foster inclusion, written submissions and presentations highlighted the importance of promoting positive and productive working relationships between Travellers and the settled community. The Committee heard that we need to move beyond our segregated worlds and look at ways to foster inclusion and dialogue through collaborations locally and nationally.

Many written submissions and presentations highlighted the lack of trust between Travellers and the State. To move forward, the State needs to acknowledge its historic denial of the Traveller community’s rights, culture and identity. Being spoken about, rather than spoken to, has disempowered the community, and has led Travellers to feel like they are “colluding” to maintain a status quo which has historically acted to stop the participation of the Traveller community.

“From a Traveller perspective, what would go a long way to begin to heal some of the hurt would be an apology from the State to Travellers for the difficulties and the exclusion that the State has caused the Travellers. That is what Travellers on the ground are looking for and it would be a starting point. There needs to be accountability for the lack of implementation of policies.”

Thomas McCann, Traveller Counselling Service.

Ms. Deirdre O'Reilly, Traveller Health Co-Ordinator for Cork and Kerry, further called for analysis and documentation of the impact of State-sponsored discrimination on generations of Traveller men, women and children. Through recognition and accountability of the inequality, marginalisation and segregation caused by policies and actions and inactions of the State, the Traveller community could begin to heal. In order to participate effectively in political life in Ireland, their suffering and identity needs to be recognised, respected and understood.

The development of a programme like the Citizen Traveller Campaign or a Citizens' Assembly to develop dialogue between the settled community and Travellers was suggested. This could be in the form of local initiatives that would be led by the Traveller groups; spaces could be created where the settled community would be invited to participate and interact with Travellers in positive and meaningful ways. This could help tackle the identity erosion of Traveller culture which has led to internalised shame, and in some cases to a crisis of identity.

“While ethnicity is incredibly important, our basic needs are still not being met”.

Oein De Bhardúin, National LGBT Traveller and Roma Action Group.

There were consistent calls across the written submissions and presentations for the strengthening, resourcing and progress of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy. The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy contains 149 actions across ten themes pertaining to Cultural Identity, Education, Employment and The Traveller Economy, Children and Youth, Health, Gender Equality, Anti-Discrimination and Equality, Accommodation, Traveller and Roma Communities, and Public Services. The National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy was referred to repeatedly throughout the Seanad public consultation process, and the importance of monitoring the implementation of the strategy was consistently stressed. The Committee heard that for the Traveller community to begin to heal and move towards greater social inclusion, their basic needs must be addressed.

Recommendations

32. Acknowledgement of the impact of inequality, marginalisation and segregation caused by policies and actions and inactions of the State.
33. Development of a programme like the Citizen Traveller Campaign or a Citizens' Assembly to develop dialogue between the settled community and Travellers.
34. Progress implementation of the National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS) through adequately resourced actions and implementation plans by all Government Departments involved, with the actions taken in full consultation with Traveller and Roma organisations. Strengthen the existing implementation and monitoring plan for NTRIS with clear targets, indicators, timeframes and budget lines.

Appendix 1: Seanad Public Consultation Committee – Invitation to Submit

Seanad Public Consultation on Travellers Towards a more equitable Ireland post-recognition

Seanad Public Consultation Committee is seeking your ideas

Background

On the 1 of March, 2017 the Irish State formally recognised the ethnicity of Irish Travellers and in doing so ushered in a new era of mutual understanding and relations.

“I hope that today will create a new platform for positive engagement by the Traveller community and Government together in seeking sustainable solutions which are based on respect and on an honest dialogue.”

Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, speech on recognition of Traveller Ethnicity

Seanad Public Consultation Committee Objectives

In light of this new period of State engagement, the Seanad Public Consultation Committee wishes to reach out to, consult with, and listen to Travellers and others; to consider proposals to support Travellers’ full equality post-ethnicity and make recommendations on the way forward.

We openly invite members of the Irish Traveller communities, both as individuals and organisations and any other interested parties, to put forward legislative, policy and other constructive ideas. We would like to receive views from people from across the spectrum of age, ability, gender, sexuality and geography.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee welcomes your submissions under the two themes which are set out below:

1. Traveller Participation & Politics... your ideas to:
 - Strengthen the political representation of Travellers locally, nationally and internationally.
 - Promote and support increased involvement of Travellers in decision-making processes within the public sphere.
 - Increase the inclusion of Travellers within civil structures, governmental agencies and Departments.
2. Dialogue and Traveller social Inclusion... your ideas to:
 - Foster inclusion, dialogue and relationships between Travellers and the wider community.
 - Address the stigma, prejudice, discrimination, racism, social exclusion and identity erosion experienced by Travellers.
 - Ensure accurate and fair treatment in the media.

The process

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee is particularly interested in hearing from and the views and/or experiences of:

1. Travellers
2. Traveller NGOs, equality bodies and civil society groups
3. Government Departments
4. Public bodies
5. NGOs
6. Public Representatives
7. Research bodies and third-level institutions
8. Private citizens
9. Media

In addition, the Committee may invite witnesses to make oral presentations to the Seanad Public Consultation in public hearings.

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee will draft and publish a report in which it will make findings and recommendations.

When its report has been published, the Committee will present findings and request a debate with the Minister or relevant Ministers in the Seanad.

Submissions

Submissions should not exceed five pages and should contain the following information:

1. The name, postal address, e-mail address and telephone number of the organisation or person making the submission;
2. A brief introduction indicating any experience, expertise or background you may have in this area;
3. Factual information, observations or opinions that you believe will assist the Committee in drawing conclusions;
4. Changes that you believe need to be made to legislation or public policy.

Submissions will be circulated to all members of the Committee and may be published, in whole or in part, in the Committee's report and/or on the Committee's webpage. If you prefer not to have your submission published in the report or on the Committee's website, please indicate this clearly.

The Committee's Terms of Reference contain a number of conditions, set out below, which govern the content of submissions. Contributors are asked to bear these in mind:

"A submission is admissible unless it –

- (a) requests the Seanad to do anything other than the Seanad have power to do;*
- (b) does not comply with Standing Orders or is otherwise not in proper form;*
- (c) contains any matter which is sub judice within the meaning of Standing Order 47;*
- (d) comments on, criticises or makes charges against a person outside the House or an official, either by name or in such a way as to make him or her identifiable;*
- (e) contains language which is offensive or defamatory;*
- (f) is the same as, or in substantially similar terms to, a submission made by or on behalf of the same person or body during the lifetime of the Committee."*

Submissions must be received by the Clerk to the Committee not later than 4 pm on Friday, 14th June, 2019.

Receipt of submissions by e-mail, and in Microsoft Word format, is preferred. The e-mail address for submissions is: seanadpublicconsult@oireachtas.ie.

Submissions may also be sent by post to:

Bridget Doody
Clerk to the Seanad Public Consultation Committee
Seanad Office
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

Appendix 2: List of submissions received

1. Mary Ruane
2. Dr. Karl Kitching
3. Jane Mulcahy
4. Deirdre O'Reilly
5. Michelle Kearns
6. Niamh Bhreathnach
7. Kevin Burn
8. Bec Fahy
9. Bernard Sweeney, Dylan Foley
10. Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
11. Cork Traveller Women's Network
12. Deirdre McGillicuddy PhD
13. Traveller Equality & Justice Project
14. Cork Traveller Visibility Group (TVG)
15. Dr. Fergal F. Davis
16. Patrick McDonagh
17. Dr. Andrew Ó Baoill
18. Social Justice Ireland
19. National Women's Council of Ireland
20. Irish Traveller Movement
21. Yellow Flag Programme
22. Timothy J. Hogan
23. Denis Robinson
24. National Traveller Women's Forum
25. Traveller Mediation Service
26. National Museum of Ireland
27. National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks (NCCWN)
28. LGBT Ireland
29. Longford Community Resources clg
30. Galway City Community Network
31. National Action Group for LGBT+ Traveller and Roma Rights
32. Abortion Rights Campaign

33. Children's Rights Alliance
34. Citizens Information Board
35. Wexford Traveller Development Group
36. Community Law & Mediation
37. Community Work Ireland
38. ASTI
39. Denis Robinson
40. Heather Rosen
41. Wicklow Travellers Group
42. Tallaght Travellers Community Development Project Ltd
43. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions
44. Dr. Aileen Kitching
45. Senator Alice-Mary Higgins
46. National Traveller Mental Health Network
47. Traveller Counselling Service
48. National Youth Council of Ireland
49. Róisín Murphy
50. W. Salters Sterling
51. Private Citizen
52. Donegal Travellers Project
53. Rose Marie Maughan
54. Sinn Féin
55. Galway Traveller Movement
56. Thomas Erbsloh
57. Minceirs Whiden (Cant for Travellers talking)
58. Free Legal Aid Centres (FLAC)
59. College Connect, Maynooth University and Offaly Traveller Movement
60. Mental Health Reform
61. John Carroll
62. Marino Institute of Education
63. St. Catherine's C.S.C Carlow
64. Ferns Diocesan Youth Service
65. Press Council of Ireland
66. Wexford Traveller Interagency Group
67. Deputy David Stanton, Minister of State for Equality and Integration

Appendix 3: List of witnesses who presented to the Committee

Theme 1 – Traveller Participation and Politics

Deputy David Stanton, Minister of State with special responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration.

Mr. Martin Collins, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre.

Mr. Patrick McDonagh, PhD student, Trinity College Dublin.

Ms. Kathleen Sherlock, Co-ordinator, Minceirs Whiden (Cant for Travellers talking).

Ms. Rosaleen McDonagh, Minceirs Whiden (Cant for Travellers talking).

Mr. Bernard Joyce, Director, Irish Traveller Movement.

Ms. Joanna Corcoran, Galway Traveller Movement.

Ms. Rachel Doyle, National Co-ordinator, Community Work Ireland.

Ms. Ann Irwin, Community Work Ireland.

Mr. Kevin Burn, CEO, Exchange House Ireland.

Ms. Minnie Connors, Wexford Traveller Development Group.

Ms. Deirdre McGarry-Barker, Wexford Traveller Development Group.

Mr. John Lonergan, former Governor of Mountjoy Prison.

Theme 2 – Dialogue and Traveller Social Inclusion

Mr. Chris McDonagh, Traveller Mediation Service

Mr. Denis Robinson, Doctoral candidate, University College Cork.

Ms. Lynn Scarff, National Museum of Ireland.

Ms. Rosa Meehan, National Museum of Ireland.

Ms. Maria Joyce, Co-ordinator, National Traveller Women's Forum.

Mr. Oein De Bhairdúin, National Action Group for LGBT Traveller and Roma Rights.

Dr. Karl Kitching, Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, UCC.

Ms. Rose Marie Maughan, Hearing Autistic Traveller Voices.

Mr. Thomas McCann, Traveller Counselling Service.

Ms. Brigid Carmody, Co-ordinator, Cork Traveller Women's Network.

Ms. Louise Harrington, Community Development Worker, Cork Traveller Women's Network.

Ms. Eilis Barry, Chief Executive, Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC).

Appendix 4: Orders of Reference of the Seanad Public Consultation Committee

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee on Procedure and Privileges pursuant to Standing Order 98(1)(a) –

- (1) A select committee, which shall be called the Seanad Public Consultation Committee (“the Committee”), shall be appointed to facilitate direct engagement and consultation between members of the public and Seanad Éireann on specific issues related to the legislative powers of the Seanad or an issue of public policy.
- (2) The Committee shall consist of 11 members including the Leas-Chathaoirleach who, ex officio, shall be Chairman of the Committee and the quorum of the Committee shall be five.
- (3) The Committee –
 - (a) shall identify for examination specific issues related to the legislative powers of the Seanad or an issue of public policy;
 - (b) shall, for the purposes of sub-paragraph (a), have the powers defined in Standing Order 72(1) and (2);
 - (c) shall, in respect of any issue it identifies for examination in accordance with sub-paragraph (a), exercise its power under Standing Order 72(2) by public notice which shall specify the issue on which written submissions are invited and the date by which they must be received by the Committee: provided that the Committee may also invite written submissions directly from interested persons or bodies;
 - (d) shall review submissions received by it, determine whether or not such submissions are admissible in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraph (8) of this Standing Order, reject any submissions which it rules to be inadmissible and consider what action, if any, to take in relation to submissions which it judges to be admissible; and
 - (e) shall, for the purposes of sub-paragraphs (a) and (d) of this paragraph, meet in private.
- (4) The Committee may meet in public in the Seanad Chamber for the purpose of taking oral evidence.
- (5) Paragraphs (2) to (6) inclusive of Standing Order 77 shall not apply to the Committee.
- (6) In addition to its obligation under Standing Order 77(1) to lay every report made by it before the Seanad, the Committee may refer any report made by it to the relevant joint committee.
- (7) Written submissions to the Committee shall clearly indicate the name of the person or body making the submission and a postal or e-mail address.
- (8) A submission is admissible unless it –
 - (a) requests the Seanad to do anything other than the Seanad has power to do;
 - (b) does not comply with Standing Orders or is otherwise not in proper form;
 - (c) it contains any matter which is sub judice within the meaning of Standing Order 47;
 - (d) comments on, criticises or makes charges against a person outside the House or an official, either by name or in such a way as to make him or her identifiable;
 - (e) contains language which is offensive or defamatory;
 - (f) is the same as, or in substantially similar terms to, a submission made by or on behalf of the same person or body during the lifetime of the Committee.



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