



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Equalities and Human Rights Committee

Christina McKelvie MSP
Convener

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T3.40

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Via email only

7 June 2017

Dear Angela Constance,

Gypsy Traveller Community in Scotland

In September 2016 we received a briefing from Professor John Curtice of Strathclyde University on the Scottish Government funded Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2015. The survey found prejudice towards some groups, including Gypsy/Travellers, was still at a relatively high level when other prejudice towards other groups of protected characteristics had fallen. For example, Gypsy/Travellers were viewed as the group least suited to being a primary school teacher, with around a third (34%) saying they would be unsuitable. Whilst acknowledging this discriminatory attitude has reduced from 46% in 2010 when the last survey was conducted, this indicates there is still significant prejudice towards Gypsy/Travellers.

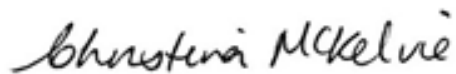
On 1 June the Committee held an evidence session on the 'Gypsy Traveller Community in Scotland' to follow up on the previous session's Committee reports: Gypsy/Travellers, [Gypsy/Travellers and Care](#) on 24 September 2012 and [Where Gypsy/Travellers Live](#) on 25 March 2013 and to examine what progress has been made. The [Official Report](#) of this session, where we heard from Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), MECOPP and STEP, is now available.

Chris Oswald said to us that although a number of pertinent recommendations had been made “unfortunately, during the lifetime of the committee and certainly during my engagement with Gypsy Traveller issues, which has lasted about 20 to 25 years, we have seen little progress.”¹

We are aware the Gypsy/Traveller Strategy Development Group was set up with the aim of publishing an overarching strategy and action plan for Gypsy/Travellers and we understood that any strategy would respond to many of the recommendations made by both inquiries. The strategy was initially expected to be published by summer 2015, however, you advised on 30 June 2016 that the strategy had been paused “to allow for a period of reflection” after concerns from the Gypsy/Traveller Strategy Development Group.²

The Committee will be considering its work programme for the coming year in the near future and, as such, we wish to consider further how we might progress work in this area. We would therefore appreciate an update as to when the strategy will be published. It would also be helpful to have a fuller explanation as to why the strategy has been delayed as this will help us to consider where we can enhance ongoing activity. A response by 22 June would allow us to consider the response before the summer recess.

Yours sincerely,



Christina McKelvie MSP
Convener
Equalities and Human Rights Committee

¹ Equalities and Human Rights Committee, Official Report, 1 June 2017, Col 2

² Equalities and Human Rights Committee, Official Report, 1 June 2017, Col 2