



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE  
CHRISTINA MCKELVIE MSP  
CONVENER**

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21 December 2017

Dear Angela,

**Race Equality Action Plan and Gypsy Traveller Working Group**

Thank you for your letter of 12 December on the publication of the Scottish Government's Race Equality Action Plan. The Equalities and Human Rights Committee (EHRiC) will look to scrutinise the progress of this Action Plan through our 2018 work programme.

I also hope to identify a suitable date for an oral evidence session with you on this topic in the first half of 2018.

The Committee also welcomes the establishment of the Ministerial Working Group on Gypsy Travellers to be chaired by you. As you stated to the Committee in during your evidence to us earlier today, I hope this Group will provide the much needed and long overdue focus on the significant barriers Gypsy Travellers face daily in Scottish society.

To that end, the Committee would appreciate further written clarification from you on the proposed operations of the Ministerial Working Group, what you see as its key priorities and the timescales you are looking to set in terms of achieving your objectives?

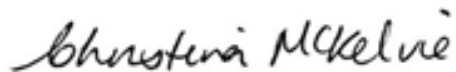
One other key element to emerge from the Committee's recent work with Gypsy Travellers for Human Rights Day 2017, was the continued trend for the government and public sectors in Scotland to talk about the issues facing Gypsy Traveller communities, rather than talking directly to them and

involving them in the decision making process from the outset. We have heard that where local authorities and others have worked directly with members of the community, agreeable solutions have been found to a variety of problems.

We noted when the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney MSP, established the Government Working Group on LGBTI Inclusive Education, the group included various representatives from the LGBTI community in Scotland. Having such voices sitting around the table is, in our view, vital to the success of such initiatives. While we appreciate a Ministerial Working Group is different in structure, we believe direct input by the Gypsy Travellers is equally important.

Therefore, we would appreciate if you could publicly set out how you see the voices from across the Gypsy Traveller community being directly included in work of the Ministerial Working Group?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina McKelvie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christina McKelvie  
Convener  
Equalities and Human Rights Committee

cc: James Dornan MSP, Convener, Education and Skills Committee