

## Categories and Nominees

### **Inspirational Young Person Award**

This category was open to young people up to the age of 21. We wanted to celebrate young people who have shown commitment to communities, friends and family. In particular: Young people who have worked hard to make a difference in their communities and society, such as volunteering or setting up projects for something they feel passionate about. Those who have overcome difficulty to achieve success. Young people who have shown leadership and helped support their friends or family.

*The shortlisted people for this category are:*

**Angela Mahoney** - Angela was just 16 when she delivered a talk to the LUSH summit for London Gypsies and Travellers on how the law affects the Gypsy and Traveller way of life. Angela has worked hard in her studies and has blossomed in her work with children and the elderly. Angela continues to work in community activism and is a strident, outspoken campaigner for Traveller rights.

**Maggie and Jade Smith** - Twin sisters Maggie and Jade have been running a series of fundraising events in loving memory of their friend Caitlin Sharp, raising an incredible £1119.75 for the Epilepsy Society. Over 400 people came to raise money or took part in a rounders tournament held at the Malvern cricket club. In Maggie's words, "We want to raise awareness of epilepsy so that families are less likely to experience the heartache and pain Caitlin's family and friends have experienced. By raising over a grand for the epilepsy society we wanted to contribute to their funds pushing for support offered to sufferers and their families, so that they can have the support that they deserve. Ultimately we raised the money in Caitlin's memory and we want to ensure she is remembered for the happy and bubbly teenager that she was!" They plan to do more fundraising this upcoming year in Caitlin's memory and offer support to Caitlin's family always.

**Nathan Abdul Karim** - At age just 10, Nathan wrote to the former PM, Theresa May, about the chronic lack of sites and equal rights for the UK's Gypsy and Traveller communities. He wrote the letter as part of an 'inspiring writing' project at school. "It is made difficult or impossible for us to make sites for our people, where are we to go?". Inspired by his grandad Joe, Nathan wants to fight discrimination and for Gypsies and Travellers to receive equal rights and treatment. The Jewish human rights organisation Rene Cassin described his letter as poignant.

### **Arts, Culture and Heritage Award**

This category was open to anyone who has made a significant contribution to the arts, culture or heritage. This includes dancers, actors, artists, poets, singers, musicians, photographers and more. In particular:

Those who excel at a particular skill or talent.

Those with a serious commitment to sustaining and growing their culture, from documenting what it means to be a Gypsy or Traveller, to reviving past traditions.

Individuals who have celebrated Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture through group activities, such as creating musical groups and theatre productions.

The shortlisted people for this category are:

**Thomas McCarthy** - Thomas comes from a long line of traditional singers and musicians and he continues to keep the tradition of storytelling and singing alive. Thomas was the first Irish Traveller to win the TG4 Gradam Ceoil 'Singer of the Year' award in 2019. Thomas has brought the oral tradition of storytelling to the present, having released three albums. In Thomas' words "I started collecting all the songs because I knew if anything happened to my mother they'd all be lost."

**Damian Le Bas** - Working for Travellers' Times for over 10 years, including four years as editor, Damian is also a writer, presenter, filmmaker and poet. His book 'The Stopping Places: a Journey through Gypsy Britain' was Radio 4 'Book of the Week' and won the 2019 Somerset Maugham Award. He also presented A Very British History: Romany Gypsies on BBC4. A wonderful ambassador and champion of Romany culture, Damian is an inspiration.

**Lolly Golding** - Documenting her New Traveller community since the 1980s, Lolly has the proven talent for anything creative, from playwriting to chainsaw wood carving, whilst remaining true to her Traveller background, embracing and promoting her way of life through her art. Lolly has designed a unique Tartan design, with each colour telling a story about life on the road.

### **Sporting Excellence Award**

This category was open to anyone who has done brilliantly in their chosen sports field. This category will reward those who are performing at a high level regionally or internationally, or who have achieved something brilliant locally. In particular:

Those who have shown dedication and have overcome obstacles.

Those who have shown commitment to their community, their sport and to improving themselves.

Those who have achieved impressive results.

The shortlisted people for this category are:

**Johnboy Smith** - Johnboy Smith has travelled the world wheelchair racing and in just over 4 years of competing is now ranked #2 in the UK. Johnboy suffered a spinal cord injury in 2006 which left him with complete T10/T11 Paraplegia but he threw himself into sport as soon as he could, first with Wheelchair Bodybuilding through different sports until he found Wheelchair racing in 2015. Since the accident he has been vocal to help people realise there

is 'life after disability and tragedy'. In Johnboy's own words: "If someone, whether they are from the Traveller community or not, comes to me and says I am the reason they are getting out of bed, then I have done my job."

**Darren Parker** - Darren started American Kickboxing and since has moved on to Chinese Kickboxing and Sanda. Being home educated, Darren finds kickboxing compliments his learning and discipline. Despite winning gold in the British Nationals three times, he is humble and quiet about his achievements. Darren motivates himself to train and has total admiration and respect for his trainers, Nick Evergreen and Shaun Weller who have supported him to earn a place at the National Sanda Championships in Moscow in May.

**Phoebe Buckley** - Phoebe has loved horses since she was young but started riding school when she was 11. Phoebe didn't plan to compete for Britain, she rides for love, but she won gold at the Young Rider European Championships in Sweden. Phoebe works hard and passionately to raise awareness of the dangers of social media and online bullying. In Phoebe's own words: "I have represented my country and won a gold medal, yet I am judged on my background, and not on who I am or by my ability. The middle years of my career were very difficult, but it taught me a lot about myself, and about others."

### **The Education Award**

This category was open to people of all ages who have made an impact in education. This can be in their own progress, or a teacher or teaching assistant who goes above and beyond for their students, as well as community members teaching a trade. As long as it's educational, it counted! We were looking for:

People who promote and support education.

People who have achieved something great in their own education – perhaps going back to school at an older age, or being the first person in a family to have gone to university.

Anyone that's helped the development and education of children and young people, whether academic or vocational.

Those who have helped others perform to the best of their abilities, such as setting up a homework club or encouraging people to learn.

The shortlisted people for this category are:

**Lisa Smith** - Lisa Smith is a Global Leader for Young Children at the World Forum Foundation and is Chair of the Advisory Council for Education of Romany & other Travellers. Lisa has worked in Traveller Education and works locally and nationally to remove barriers to educational inclusion. Lisa is passionate about the power of education in all its many forms and inspires young Gypsies and Travellers – through Youth Travellers Times (YTT) Lisa facilitates training for young Gypsies and Travellers through journalism and filmmaking programmes. Last year Lisa, with Travellers Times and Rural Media, made and released a series of ground-breaking films 'Its Kushti to Rokker' which have opened up the

conversation on mental health for Gypsies and Travellers and mental health service providers.

**Kathleen Anne Boswell** - Kathleen Anne works to address all the things that can cause lasting damage to young people in her community, from nutrition to enjoying healthy relationships. As Youth Worker at LeedsGATE, Kathleen uses her experience as a tool to prepare young Travellers for adulthood, encouraging community cohesion and building positive relationships with settled communities.

**Billie-Jo Sines** - Described as “one of the kindest people you will meet”, Billie-Jo is a brilliant youth worker and goes above and beyond to help any one that is in need. As a Key Worker within student support systems, Billie-Jo has played a pivotal role in developing relationships between teachers, parents and pupils. She’s delivered cultural awareness training in the South East and is committed to educational inclusion.

### **Inspirational Project Award**

This award was for individuals and groups who have started a project that has had a positive impact. The focus of the project can involve anything to do with the community, from befriending schemes for the more vulnerable, to building a community room. Anything! We were looking for:

An individual or group of people who have made the lives of those around them better.

An individual or group of people who have achieved something amazing.

A project that was achieved through dedication to a particular cause, shown through passion, guts and surviving adversity.

The shortlisted projects for this category are:

**Life Changing Choices** - Dorset-based non-contact boxing programme, Life Changing Choices is run by Michael Johnson who has overcome significant adversity in his own life and works tirelessly, 24 hours a day, to improve his local community. The gym supports the whole community in Poole, especially young people, with mental health, drug and alcohol issues, crime and anti-social behaviour, and signposting them in the right way. In the words of Nathalie Sherring, Chief Officer of Dorset Race Equality Council, “The young people love it.. they support each other and have a good time. The adults who come have seen a huge difference in the young people. Everyone is happy, there’s no bad behaviour.”

**Traveller Pride** - Tyler is a Showman and the founder of Traveller Pride, a campaign created by and for LGBT+ Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. Tyler coordinated and facilitated the first representation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities at London Pride. Tyler has also created and formed a helpline for LGBT+ Gypsies, Roma and Travellers for solidarity and support, and conducts training and workshops to ensure inclusivity within LGBT+ movements and Traveller groups. As a Traveller Pride participant said: “Going to Pride –

meeting people from my own community, having official representation – was just phenomenal”.

**One Call Away** – We are all too aware that members of Gypsy and Traveller communities are at 6-7 times higher risk of suicide than members of the general population and this has had a devastating toll on Gypsy and Traveller communities. Siblings Caroline and Mark wanted to do something to support people in crisis and made the decision to set up a one-of-a-kind 24 hour helpline to help people from Gypsy and Traveller communities get through difficult emotions and access mental health services. They both received training from CPSL Mind and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and have been able to support people from Lands End to Australia. In their words: “After we talk to someone, we don’t always know we’ve helped. On New Year’s Eve, we received messages of thanks and the difference the helpline has made. Lives have been saved.”

### **Alexander Award for Lifetime Achievement**

The Alexander Award for Lifetime Achievement is awarded in honour of [Susan Alexander](#), or ‘Alex’ as she was known to us, who sadly passed away in August 2019. The award will recognise those who, like Alex, have dedicated their lives to improving the lives of others.

We were looking for:

People who understand hard work and being a socially-conscious and community-oriented member of society.

People who have demonstrated a lifetime of commitment to a cause for the benefit of a community or wider society.

Those who kept going through difficulty and made a positive contribution to better the lives of others.

A positive role-model with outstanding, creative and visionary leadership skills.

We were absolutely blown away by the sheer amount of people nominated for this award which received more nominations than any other category. The shortlisted people for this category are:

**Joe Jones** - Throw a stone and you’ll find someone who’s got more than enough kind words for Joe. Known as a long-time Gypsy and Traveller activist, Joe is considered a leader, pushing to better the lives of all Gypsies and Travellers regardless of the size of the challenge. Joe has been heavily involved with national organisations like the Gypsy Council, International Romani Union and the Traveller Law Reform Coalition, but he’s never stopped working on the ground, setting up youth clubs, going to hearings and fighting tooth and nail for planning permission.

**Betty Smith-Billington** - Betty is a well-liked and highly respected individual, who is known to be warm and caring by all who meet her. She is very influential with public services in her

local area and stands shoulder to shoulder with all settled and travelling communities, thanks to her strong sense of justice. Whilst chairing Kushti Bok and as a member of Dorset Inter-Agency Concern for Travellers (DIACT), Betty works to make the world a better and fairer place. She successfully campaigned to establish the Dorset Roma Holocaust Memorial Service, which commemorates Roma and Sinti lives lost during the Holocaust. A part of history “people wouldn’t know about without Betty”. Betty is known to be a great singer and loves singing karaoke - even winning competitions when she was younger!

**Josie O’Driscoll** - Josie is known to work tirelessly to better the lives of Gypsies and Travellers. From setting up GATE-Herts to Report Racism GRT, Josie isn’t afraid to tackle a problems head on and navigate new ways to call on politicians, local authorities and service providers to tackle inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. She has worked on many projects, from the DOSTA GRINTA Demonstration to the Social Changemakers project. Josie is full of warmth and compassion – she lends a listening ear when needed and is always happy to help the community.