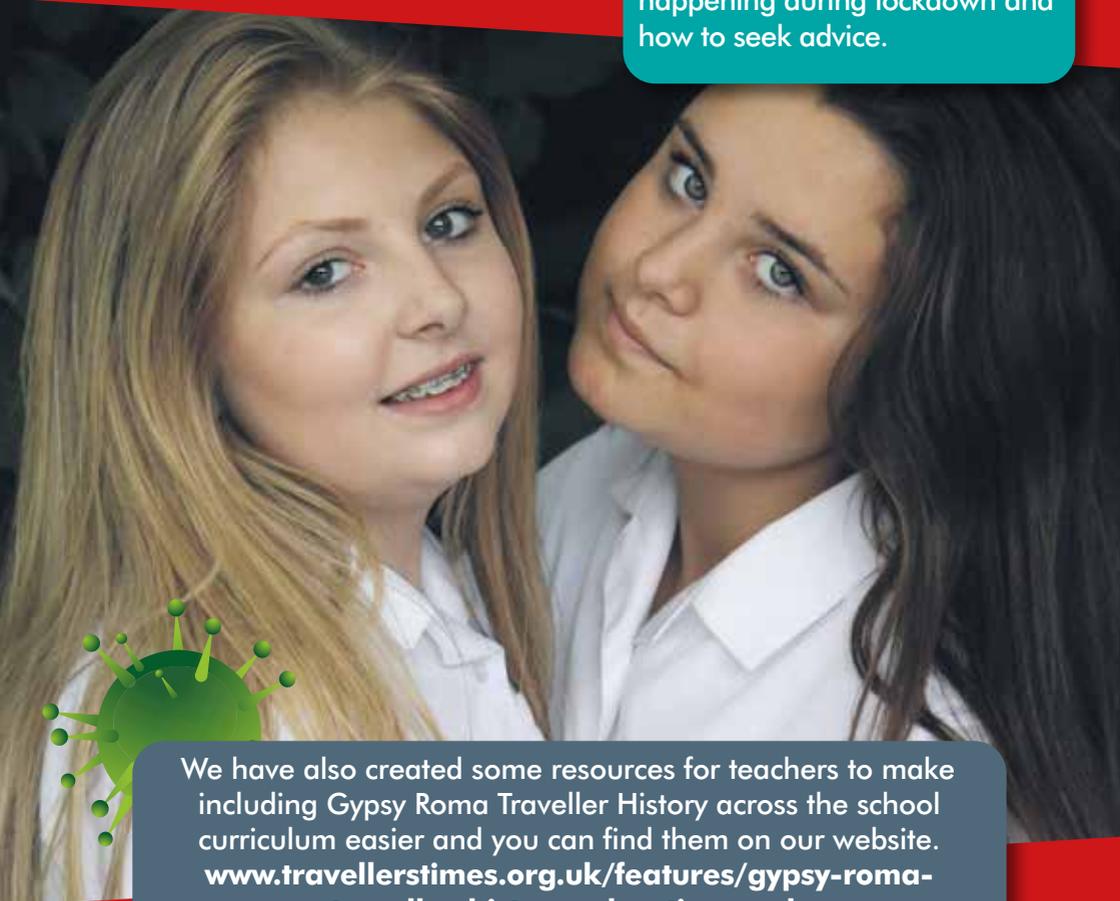


# TRAVELLERS TIMES

Welcome to the special Education edition of TT. It has been a busy few months as we continue to respond to the ever changing COVID19 situation. We have put this edition together to tell you about some of the great things that have been happening during lockdown and how to seek advice.



We have also created some resources for teachers to make including Gypsy Roma Traveller History across the school curriculum easier and you can find them on our website. [www.travellerstimes.org.uk/features/gypsy-roma-traveller-history-education-pack](http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/features/gypsy-roma-traveller-history-education-pack)

**TT COVID19 EDUCATION SPECIAL**  
TRAVELLERS TIMES, COVID19 EDUCATION  
EDITION FOR GYPSIES, ROMA AND TRAVELLERS



## HOME LEARNING HAS BECOME THE 'NEW NORMAL' FOR MOST CHILDREN AND PARENTS AND COULD MEAN A BIG CHANGE IN EDUCATION - FOR THE BETTER?

Schools had to adapt very quickly and are using online learning platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google classroom, this technology turns a laptop screen into a classroom where students and teachers can see and question each other.

This is something many Romani and Traveller families have been calling on the government and schools to incorporate (long distance and more flexible learning options) for decades only to be told it's not possible – but it seems it is! In the future we hope this may mean a positive and more inclusive change in what schools are able to offer!

It's not without its challenges though and lots of parents are concerned about the widening

## EDITORIAL

education gap for Romani and Traveller students during the pandemic given the already low attainment of many young people within our communities. Access to proper laptops or tablets, decent wi-fi, suitable spaces to learn in and, in some cases, parents struggling to guide children with their tuition are all obstacles that need to be addressed to ensure our children don't miss out on their education.

Some parents are feeling torn about whether or not to send their children back to school at present. Marie Smith, told Travellers' Times, "my daughter is meant to be moving up to big school in September and I'm worried about the impact all this time off will have on her education in the long run - but were at high risk for the coronavirus – our family is Romani/Irish Traveller and my husband is shielding. Were worried about her going back but she wants to and I can't take that from her."

**For more information, news and learning resources visit:**  
[www.travellerstimes.org.uk](http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk)

**Take care and stay safe,**  
**Lisa Smith YTT Editor.**



## RUBY SMITH, 17 HAS BEEN SPEAKING TO YOUNG GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS TO FIND OUT HOW THEY'RE COPING WITH SCHOOL CLOSURES AND LOCKDOWN LIFE.

As a Romany Gypsy A – level student, the cards are already stacked against me...writes Ruby - Leigh Smith. According to the DfE in 2018, just 19% of pupils from Irish Traveller backgrounds and 13% from Gypsy and Roma backgrounds attained GCSEs in English and Maths at grade 4/C or above, compared to 64% of pupils nationally.

I spoke to Michelle, 14, who lives in a trailer in Droitwich. She has two younger brothers and struggles to find a quiet space to get on with work that's been set. She doesn't have a laptop so uses her phone to work on the schools online learning website. Similarly, Grace, 12 from Sussex has been completing work online, though she was given paper worksheets before school closed. Like most, she

misses her friends and fears how the lockdown will affect her education and the country's future.

Scarlett, 16 from Hertfordshire is one of the lucky ones, some would say. As a result of coronavirus, she won't be sitting her GCSEs. "I don't like to think too much about my results, because I'll start feeling sick about it. Cancelling exams was the best that could be done at short notice, but not the best answer in the long run"

National NGO Traveller Movement are concerned about the widening education gap during the pandemic and have conducted a survey into the educational experiences of young Gypsies and Travellers and their parents – Read the findings and Ruby's full feature on [www.travellerstimes.org.uk](http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk)

# 'TUTORS FOR GRT' PROJECT



From years of experience working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, we knew that home schooling will be difficult for many GRT parents because of digital exclusion and low literacy levels. We also learned that most schools' homework required a computer or a printer.

With this in mind, we set up 'Tutors for GRT' project that includes every child regardless of their access to computers and printers.

Today we have 17 DBS checked volunteer tutors helping over 30 GRT children! We have set up an Amazon Wishlist in order to get laptops, tablets and printers for the children. We are also providing needed workbooks and stationary.

This project is a 'top up' service and not a permanent solution for children who are being home educated.

## HERE IS SOME FEEDBACK FROM THE PARENTS:

*'Everything is going good, my daughter has improved both in maths and English. The tutor will explain to her in simple terms the things she doesn't understand. I want to thank you for the support'.*

*'She is really enjoying the tutoring. She is enjoying have contact outside of our home and the work given is keeping her occupied during the long days of lockdown. The tutor is really nice and helpful'.*

*'It's going great, he totally understands how she is explaining everything and is looking forward to the lesson. I think I might have even been learning by accident'.*

*'Getting help with the tutoring was great. They played games to get to know each other so the children felt comfortable. And it helped to keep the kids in a routine'.*

*'My kids love the one to one session with their tutor, it helps them a lot with their English and maths. It also takes a load off for me having the support from a Teacher'.*

**Would you like help from a free and safe online tutor?  
Contact [partnershipsmanager@travellermovement.org.uk](mailto:partnershipsmanager@travellermovement.org.uk)  
or call/text 075 0099 8838**



WORKSHOP AT COVENTRY UNIVERSITY, JUST BEFORE LOCK DOWN  
© BUCKS NEW UNI



A steering group with NGOs, Universities and education policy groups was set up, and through the survey, we have started to create “Networks” throughout the country of universities, GTR organisations and community members. These networks, will become a resource for anyone thinking of accessing Higher Education.

**If you would like more information on the developing Pledge, the networks, being involved or would like to find out more about accessing support if you are thinking of entering Higher Education, please contact Sherrie Smith, Research Assistant to Professor Margaret Greenfields at [Sherrie.Smith@Bucks.ac.uk](mailto:Sherrie.Smith@Bucks.ac.uk)**

“From September I will be employed by the university to support our community in education, said Sherrie “ and will also be a student at Bucks, doing my post graduate degree in Education. Bucks New Uni is a good learning environment for us, there are fully supportive staff, GTR students, information, exhibitions, conferences, visibility and so much more. Gypsy, Roma Traveller History Month being supported by the Uni, is a small thing but it is about inclusivity and belonging, not just giving support.”

## THINKING ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION?

Last September Baroness Whitaker and Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) organised a roundtable meeting about Access to Higher Education for members of Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showpeople and Boaters (GTRSB) communities at the House of Lords. There it was agreed that there is a need for greater understanding of the barriers and challenges facing GTRSB communities and for Universities to start collaborating more with each other and with GTR organisations to support our community into Higher Education.

A survey was distributed to people who attended, to see who wanted to work together on this then workshops and interviews were carried out to decide what was needed to develop a ‘Good Practice Pledge’ or series of agreements Universities could commit to, which would help remove some of the barriers faced by GTRSB students and improve inclusivity.



## WHEN NO-ONE ELSE WILL HELP ...

Over the past ten years we have seen support for the education of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers drying-up across the country. Organisations like ACERT have campaigned as hard as we can to keep the issue in front of policy makers, but to be brutally frank, they just aren’t listening. And, if we have to make a prediction, change isn’t likely to come any time soon.

However, one of the great strengths of our communities is that we support each other, and ACERT believes that other parents will have tackled the challenges families face every day. In February we met other organisations and individuals online to talk about how we will set-up a UK wide parents’ network. The ideas that came up were to train education ambassadors to develop local groups of parents to advocate for their children’s education rights.

We had planned an event to be held in Manchester this month to launch the initiative and consult with parents and young people about what would be most useful to them. COVID-19 forced us to cancel that event but we are planning to run it in spring 2021. We’re also working on a new website where parents can find out basic information about their education rights, access resources and share the problems they face.

The dice may be loaded against us but together we can make sure our children get the education they’re entitled to.

Let us know what you think of our initiative and whether you’d like to be involved as an ambassador or trainer. We’re on Facebook [www.facebook.com/groups/acert.org](https://www.facebook.com/groups/acert.org), [twitter.com/ACERT\\_UK](https://twitter.com/ACERT_UK) and we have a **Contact Us** page at [acert.org.uk/contact\\_us](https://acert.org.uk/contact_us).

# COMPETITION TIME

AGE 11–18

**DESIGN A POSTER FOR**

**A STATE-OF-THE-ART**

**FUTURISTIC TRAILER**

1. Draw what your trailer would look like
2. Describe what high tech gadgets your trailer would have.
3. Make a sales poster to get people to buy your trailer.
4. Send your entries to our Facebook page or upload to Facebook, tagging us in the post. Or tag us on Instagram **@movingonaiminghigh**.
5. Or send in the post to **The Traveller Education Service, Darlington, DL1 4BH**.

**PRIZE FOR THE BEST TRAILER OF THE FUTURE CLOSING DATE 1ST SEPTEMBER.**

Darlington Traveller Education Service is running a competition for Gypsy Roma Traveller Month.

You can enter by sending your posters to 'The Traveller Education Service, Darlington', or by uploading onto our 'Moving On, Aiming High' Facebook page or on our instagram page.

There are 2 groups, one for Primary Aged children and one for Secondary age and home educated young people.

Be as creative as you can. Good luck and stay safe.

