

Extract from Scrutiny Inquiry Report

Review of Gypsies and Travellers Site Provision within Leeds

Education and Health Issues

70. We recognised early in our deliberations that the Council has a duty to those who are homeless and in priority need. Some of those who are homeless may have a cultural aversion to living in traditional bricks and mortar type accommodation which will need to be taken in to account when considering an offer of suitable accommodation. We acknowledged that Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers both fall within an ethnic group and are covered by the Equality Act 2010, which continues the principles of, and supersedes, the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended).

71. We recognised the potential vulnerability of travellers as a group and the endangerment of their cultural lifestyle. We know that as a cultural group gypsies and travellers have an earlier mortality rate than most groups and that education and health is poor.

72. We received information from the Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service which provides support to the children living at Cottingley Springs including transport to mainstream schools and a mobile nursery van.

73. We were concerned that some gypsy and traveller girls around aged 11 or 12 years of age seem to cease main stream education as they leave primary school and move to home school. We were assured by GATE and the road side gypsies themselves that this was no longer the case. We remain unconvinced and would recommend that some further work be undertaken in this respect.

Recommendation 9

That the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) be asked to undertake a specific investigation on the national and local position of gypsy and traveller girls school attendance and educational achievements at 11 years and above.