
Subject: Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater Strategy for Wiltshire 2020-2025

Executive Summary

1. Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater communities experience significant inequalities throughout all stages of life. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people experience the worst health outcomes of any ethnic group, and the average life expectancy is 10-12 years less than the general population. Higher rates of miscarriage, a greater proportion of individuals with long-term health conditions, and higher rates of depression and suicide are just some of the inequalities experienced by these communities. Members of the Boater communities also face significant challenges across the life course, resulting in poorer health outcomes.
2. There is an imperative on all public organisations to address health inequalities, so that all individuals have the same opportunity to live healthy lives no matter their background, ethnicity or socioeconomic status. The importance of tackling health inequalities has also been highlighted in the recent NHS Long Term plan.
3. In Spring 2019, the first Health Needs Assessment (HNA) for GRT&B communities in Wiltshire was undertaken. The HNA highlighted the significance of wider social determinants on health particularly in these communities. These can have far more significant effects on an individual's health than direct health-related interventions – wider determinants include employment status, living standards and educational attainment.
4. The current Wiltshire GRT&B strategy is due to finish in 2020. A new strategy has been developed for 2020-2025 using intelligence from the recent HNA, together with input from a range of stakeholders and public consultation. The evidence base for the strategy is based upon key government documents, published literature and evidence of best practice.
5. This new strategy is focussed on reducing the significant inequalities experienced by these communities and will work across the wider socioeconomic determinants of health to address these.
6. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to highlight the significant effect of inequalities on the health and wellbeing of vulnerable communities. This strategy will work within the framework of the Council's Recovery plans.

Proposal(s)

It is recommended that the Board:

- i) Acknowledge the Health Needs Assessment and approves the GRT&B Strategy for implementation

Reason for Proposal

The new GRT&B strategy will seek to work across Wiltshire with partners in the health and social care system, and further afield. The approval and adoption of the strategy by the HWB would reflect this broad approach to addressing health inequalities.

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Health and Wellbeing Board

24th September 2020

Subject: Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater Strategy for Wiltshire 2020-2025

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is present the final draft Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater strategy for Wiltshire for approval by the HWB (Appendix 1)

Relevance to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

2. The GRT&B strategy contributes to all four themes of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy – Prevention, Tackling Inequalities, Localisation and Integration.
 - **Prevention** – the GRT&B strategic priorities aim to increase uptake of preventative services amongst the GRT&B communities
 - **Tackling Inequalities** – tackling inequalities across the wider determinants of health is the central aim of this GRT&B strategy
 - **Localisation** – building GRT&B community member involvement and feedback into all activities across the GRT&B strategy is a key theme
 - **Integration** – a core theme through all the strategic priorities is to improve multi-agency dialogue and information sharing, to help reduce inequalities and deliver care and support at the right time in the right place

Background

3. The terms Gypsy, Roma and Traveller are used to describe a range of ethnic groups, or those with nomadic ways of life but are not from a specific ethnicity. In the UK context, there is often differentiation made between Gypsies (including English Gypsies, Scottish Gypsy/Travellers, Welsh Gypsies and other Romany people); Irish Travellers (who have specific Irish roots), and Roma (those who have more recently migrated from Central/Eastern Europe). The term Travellers also encompasses groups that travel, including New (Age) Travellers, Boaters (also known as Bargees) and Showpeople.

4. Travellers experience significant inequalities throughout all stages of life. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people experience the worst health outcomes of any ethnic group, and the average life expectancy is 10-12 years less than the general population. Higher rates of miscarriage, a greater proportion of individuals with long-term health conditions, and higher rates of depression and suicide are just some of the inequalities experienced by these communities.
5. The Parliamentary Women and Equalities Commons Select Committee published a report last year assessing the inequalities experienced by these communities¹. This inquiry found that Traveller communities have the worst outcomes across a wide range of areas, including education, health, employment, criminal justice and hate crime. They reported that national and local policy makers have failed to tackle these long-standing and substantial inequalities.
6. There is an imperative on all public organisations to address health inequalities, so that all individuals have the same opportunity to live healthy lives no matter their background, ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the public sector equality duty highlights the need for due regard of advancing equality of opportunity between those who share protected characteristics (e.g. ethnicity such as Gypsy or Irish Traveller) and those who do not.
7. The importance of tackling health inequalities has been highlighted in the recent NHS Long Term plan. This is reflected in the continued higher share of funding towards areas with high health inequalities, and requirement for local health systems to describe how they are specifically reducing health inequalities.
8. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected those living in disadvantaged areas, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. It has highlighted the significant inequalities experienced by vulnerable communities. The need for this strategy and its work to reduce inequalities is therefore highly pertinent in the context of COVID-19, and in keeping with the Council's Recovery plans.
9. In Spring 2019, a Health Needs Assessment (HNA) (Appendix 2) was undertaken to better understand the needs of the Wiltshire Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater population. This was the first local HNA for these communities, using local data, national resources and published evidence. This intelligence shows that there are inequalities across several areas e.g. poor educational attendance and attainment; reduced uptake of carer support. Whilst local data was limited, the evidence from national and published data shows that the GRT&B communities continue to have significant needs.

¹ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/360/full-report.html>

10. The HNA was informed by service user and service provider feedback. Feedback from local GRT community members broadly corroborated the findings of the HNA whilst highlighting some notable areas of difference (e.g. access to primary care was felt to be adequate).
11. The HNA highlighted the opportunity to improve cultural awareness amongst all services who interact with these communities, to help reduced barriers to service uptake. It also identified the need to improve community representation in the development and implementation of policies and services for Travellers. Furthermore, it highlighted the importance of information and data sharing between services to help support members of the community.
12. The significance of social determinants on health (e.g. housing, education) is also evident from the HNA. These can have far more significant effects on an individual's health than direct health-related interventions – wider determinants include employment status, living standards and educational attainment. This highlights the important interplay between inequalities experienced in all aspects of life, and an individual's health outcomes.
13. The current Wiltshire GRT&B strategy is due to finish in 2020. A new strategy has been developed for 2020-2025 using intelligence from the recent HNA, together with feedback from stakeholder consultation. The evidence base for the strategy is based upon key government documents, published literature and evidence of best practice.
14. The strategy has been developed by Wiltshire Council's Public Health team in partnership with the Traveller Reference Group (TRG) and a range of partners across Wiltshire.
15. The TRG oversees and supports the implementation of the Traveller Strategy whilst also addressing other relevant issues related to Traveller communities and has a membership of council and non-council partners. Council departments represented include housing, communications, commissioning, planning, early help, enforcement, public health, community engagement countryside and councillor representation. External partners include NHS and primary care, fire services, and police service.
16. The GRT&B strategy contributes to the Wiltshire Council business plan priorities of Stronger Communities and Protecting the Vulnerable.

Main Considerations

Engagement and Consultation

17. In December 2019, the TRG approved the draft GRT&B strategy for overview and scrutiny by the Health Select Committee.
18. In January 2020, the Health Select Committee supported the draft GRT&B strategy, ahead of a public consultation followed by consideration of the final draft by the HWB due in April 2020. The HWB meeting was re-scheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic to September 2020.
19. A public consultation took place during February - March 2020 for a 21-day period. The draft strategy document was uploaded onto the Wiltshire Council website with an accompanying online survey.
20. The consultation generated 17 respondents – 10 from individual members of the public, and 7 on behalf of organisations.
21. There was broad agreement from respondents that the strategy reflected the needs of the GRT&B communities of Wiltshire. A lack of specific projects was noted in one response – however, it was felt that this document should provide strategic direction, and specific projects will be developed during implementation. Another response expressed concern that 5 years was too short a timescale. However, this had previously been discussed by the TRG, and felt to be an ambitious but achievable timescale.
22. The survey allowed comments and feedback on each strategic priority. All comments were reviewed and considered with the final draft document. There were broadly three areas of amendments based on the public consultation.
23. A key factor which was highlighted in several responses to the public consultation was the challenge of accessing services due to non-permanent residence or not living in a ‘bricks and mortar’ residence. This included registration with healthcare, attending appointments, provision of social care, and attending education. These factors have been highlighted accordingly throughout all priorities in the final draft.
24. Respondents noted the importance of promoting good community relationships and engagement between GRT&B community members and other local communities. Therefore, the cross-cutting theme *‘Integrate community members involvement and feedback as much as possible’* has been updated to *‘Facilitate engagement with GRT and Boater communities’*. This reflects the need for better integration of GRT&B community members into decision making processes, and the need to promote good community relationships.
25. Adequate facilities and access at sites and moorings were also highlighted as an important issue through public consultation. The physical environment in which people live is known to be a significant determinant of health, particularly for the GRT and Boater community. The importance of this issue has therefore been strengthened in the strategy.

26. A number of additional key partners were identified for strategy implementation, and these have been included as appropriate.

The final draft strategy

27. The GRT&B strategy provides direction for Wiltshire Council and partner organisations to reduce inequalities experienced by Traveller communities, increase Traveller cultural awareness amongst all services, improve local data collation and sharing between partner agencies, and improve community members involvement in the decision-making processes which affect them as well as local community engagement.
28. The strategy has a wide remit, looking beyond health inequalities as an acknowledgment that Traveller communities experience substantial inequalities in many aspects of life.
29. Focussing on inequalities will bring together a range of organisations to address the issues, leading to targeted pieces of work specifically for these communities. These will be in addition to the usual business plan of all involved organisations.
30. The TRG and other key stakeholders reviewed the HNA and a draft version of the strategy document. The feedback and comments provided have been incorporated into the final version of the strategy.
31. The strategy will have 7 strategic priorities, and 4 cross-cutting themes running through all of these:

1. Educational attainment and attendance
2. Preventative services (primary, secondary and tertiary) – including management of long-term conditions; screening; immunisations; pharmacy and dental services
3. Safeguarding and violence prevention
4. Mental health
5. Maternal health and early years
6. Social care and carer support
7. Place and Community e.g. site safety, access to refuse points

- A. Increasing awareness of GRT and Boater culture and health needs
- B. Improving multi-agency dialogue and information sharing to work towards reducing inequalities using current services and resources available
- C. Improved local data collation and analysis specific to GRT and Boater communities in Wiltshire
- D. Facilitate engagement with GRT and Boater communities

32. The implementation and evaluation of the strategy will be overseen by the TRG who will be accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The TRG will monitor progress, and feedback to relevant committees and boards throughout the lifetime of the strategy.
33. An implementation plan is currently being drafted in conjunction with TRG members. The aim of the plan will define 1-2 key projects/programmes per strategic priority in a bid achieve better outcomes for GRT&B communities in Wiltshire.

Next Steps

34. If the HWB approve the final draft document for publication, the new GRT&B strategy for Wiltshire will replace the current strategy.

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Background Papers

The following document has been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Wiltshire Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater Strategy 2020-2025 (final draft)

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Wiltshire Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater Strategy 2020-2025 (final draft)

Appendix 2 Health Needs Assessment for Gypsy, Traveller and Boater Populations Living in Wiltshire