

# EVERY SCHOOL A GOOD SCHOOL

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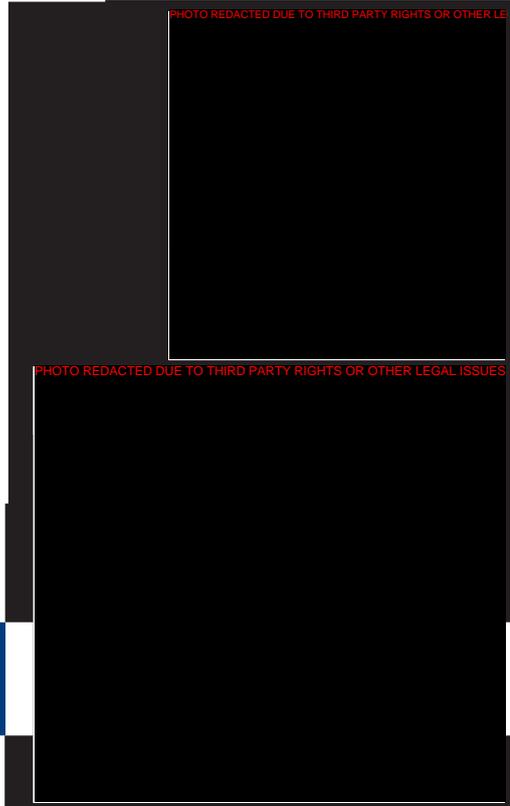
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# EVERY SCHOOL A GOOD SCHOOL

## *The Traveller Child in Education* Action Framework

# MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

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I am pleased to present for consultation my Department's draft "Traveller Child in Education Action Framework" in response to the recommendations of the Taskforce on Traveller Education and to give life to those recommendations.

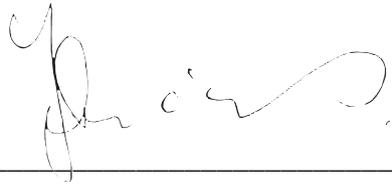
I and my Department are very grateful to the Taskforce for giving their time, hard work and expertise to provide us with the direction which has guided the development of this Action Framework. The contribution of Traveller parents was particularly valuable in helping the Taskforce to understand the challenges faced by families.

We know that Travellers have for generations suffered educational disadvantage and left school with either low level or no qualifications. This Framework is the start of a journey of inclusion, to ensure that Traveller children have the opportunity to benefit from the educational opportunities on offer, and to give them the best possible start in life. I am confident that progress can be made and I am determined that progress will be made on this journey towards full inclusion and equality.

A vital part of this consultation will be engagement with Traveller families and pupils. We want to hear their views direct from them, not from the settled community speaking on their behalf. I welcome the assistance of the Traveller Education Support Service, schools, voluntary and community organisations and other partners in that engagement.

## *The Traveller Child in Education* Action Framework

I ask you to join with us in the Department in making sure that the actions we are taking to encourage and support Traveller education are the right ones. I would value your engagement in this consultation and any comments you provide.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John O'Dowd', written over a horizontal line.

**JOHN O'DOWD MLA**  
**Minister for Education**

# CONSULTATION

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In the course of its work, the Taskforce on Traveller Education and its six thematic sub-groups engaged with a range of stakeholders including Travellers before developing their recommendations.

DE is now consulting on the Action Framework set out in the following pages which is the Department's response to those recommendations. The Department welcomes the views of any organisation, group or individual on the actions proposed in this document.

A Response Booklet to help you to give your feedback can be viewed and downloaded from the Department's website at [www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/additional-educational-support/18\\_pupils\\_parents-travellers\\_pg/draft\\_traveller\\_child\\_in\\_education\\_action\\_framework\\_consultation.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/additional-educational-support/18_pupils_parents-travellers_pg/draft_traveller_child_in_education_action_framework_consultation.htm)

The deadline for your responses is **31 December 2012**.

The Department has commissioned the regional Traveller Education Support Service to undertake consultation with Traveller families and pupils with the assistance of a range of partners including schools and voluntary community sector organisations.

**A children and young people's version** of the draft Traveller Child in Education Framework consultation can be downloaded from the Department's website [www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/additional-educational-support/18\\_pupils\\_parents-travellers\\_pg/draft\\_traveller\\_child\\_in\\_education\\_action\\_framework\\_consultation.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/additional-educational-support/18_pupils_parents-travellers_pg/draft_traveller_child_in_education_action_framework_consultation.htm)

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Use of this documentation by schools during delivery of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding element of the curriculum would enable the views of both Traveller and non Traveller children to be captured.

Comments on this Framework and/or requests for hard copies can be made by post, fax or email to the address on the Response Booklet. A summary of consultation responses and a list of respondents will be placed on our website. If you do not want your name or response to be published on the website please make this clear in your response.

If you need these documents in any other format such as large print, Braille, audio format or another language, please contact us by any of the following methods.

By phone: 02891 279441

By fax: 02891 279100

By email: [additionaleducationalneedsteam@deni.gov.uk](mailto:additionaleducationalneedsteam@deni.gov.uk)

By writing to: Additional Educational Needs Team  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
43 Balloo Road  
Rathgill  
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BT19 7PR

## INTRODUCTION

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The 2001 census revealed that 69% of Travellers of working age had no qualifications. A further 22% had low level qualifications. The poor experience of the previous generation in the education system also impacts on the experiences of today's children.

The Minister for Education's main priority is to raise standards and tackle underachievement and inequality in our education system. "Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement" (ESaGS), the Department's overarching strategy for achieving this priority, recognises Travellers as being one of the groups that require a particular focus to close the gap in achievement and equality. This Action Framework sits within the overall context of improving educational outcomes and contributes towards the delivery of ESaGS.

There are fewer than 1,000 Traveller children enrolled in schools and pre-school provision here and the Department currently invests over £1.6million additional funding each year to support their education. This has resulted in some encouraging improvements, for example: the number of children in pre-school education has doubled over the past 10 years; and there has been a steady increase in the number of Traveller pupils in post-primary education.

However, despite the Department's considerable investment in Traveller education, Traveller pupils continue to have exceptionally poor educational outcomes with only 11 school leavers over the six year period 2004/05 to 2009/10 achieving at least 5 A\*-C GCSEs. Data also shows that attainment continues to be poor and many children of Traveller families leave school early. In 2010/11 only 37 Traveller pupils were enrolled in Year 12 of

## The Traveller Child in Education Action Framework

with 86 in Year 1 and the average attendance of those 37 pupils was less than 51%.

These poor educational outcomes can have lifetime effects. Given the historically high levels of disadvantage suffered by the Traveller community it is important to take additional positive actions to ensure that every Traveller child and young person is given the opportunity to fulfil their educational potential.

In recognition of this, and the need to ensure that the support provided is targeted more effectively, a Taskforce on Traveller Education was established in September 2008 to assist the Department to develop an action plan on Traveller education.

In 2011 the Taskforce submitted its report to the Minister for Education. The Taskforce made a number of high level recommendations which can be downloaded from the Department's website.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/recommendations\\_from\\_the\\_taskforce\\_on\\_traveller\\_educations\\_report\\_to\\_the\\_department\\_of\\_education.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/recommendations_from_the_taskforce_on_traveller_educations_report_to_the_department_of_education.pdf)

This draft Traveller Child in Education Action Framework is the Department's response to the Taskforce recommendations.

During the same period that the Taskforce was carrying out its work, the Department issued a revised circular on the Education of Children and Young People from the Traveller Community in August 2010.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/traveller\\_circular\\_-\\_english\\_-\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/traveller_circular_-_english_-_pdf.pdf)

The circular provides guidance to schools on a number of areas including: inclusion and diversity and equality of opportunity; teacher competencies;

flexible curriculum; pre-school education; transition arrangements and home-school links.

The Department of Education (DE) also continues to provide substantial support for a regional level programme, Toybox, within the Early Years organisation. The programme works with Traveller parents to promote and support the involvement of Traveller children in pre-school education.

In addition to the Traveller specific actions in this Framework, the Department has progressed policy and guidance in the following areas aimed at: overcoming disadvantage; tackling underachievement; improving inclusion; and reducing inequality. These will also help to address the barriers to learning experienced by Traveller children and young people.

The Extended Schools policy enables those schools that draw pupils from some of the most disadvantaged communities to provide a range of services and programmes outside the traditional school day to help meet the needs of pupils, their families and wider communities. The Extended Schools programme has a clear focus on improving educational outcomes, reducing barriers to learning and providing additional support to improve the life chances of disadvantaged children and young people. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) 2010 Evaluation of Extended Schools found that in almost all cases where Extended Schools are serving disadvantaged communities effectively, significant improvements are evident in the educational outcomes and the personal and social well-being of pupils.

Sixty per cent of the schools with Traveller pupils enrolled qualified for Extended Schools funding in 2010/11 and 2011/12.

In January 2012 the Minister for Education launched Community Equality and Diversity (CRED) guidance and supporting materials. Information on Traveller culture have been included in the supporting materials on the CRED website. The guidance will enable schools, early years settings

## **The Traveller Child in Education Action Framework**

youth work settings to use practical activities and experiences to explore these issues and help children and young people to understand and respect the many diverse groups across our society.

The regional Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS) has been working with colleagues in the south of Ireland to develop an online Coordination Training Tool for the professional development of teaching professionals. The purpose of the Coordination Training Tool is to further develop best practice in the context of Intercultural Education and to ensure the integration and quality attainment of children from different ethnic backgrounds and those with different home languages. The Training Tool will be piloted from September to December 2012 and it is planned to begin the full roll-out of the resource in September 2013.

Officials are currently working to finalise the draft Priorities for Youth (PfY) for Ministerial consideration. While decisions have not yet been made, it is expected that the draft PfY will set a new framework for the delivery of youth work within education where the new policy will contribute to the DE vision of every child fulfilling his or her potential. It will improve the focus on targeted provision to help meet the needs of specific groups of young people who may be at greater risk of social exclusion, may be marginalised or isolated or because they may experience a combination of barriers to learning, which may include young people from the Traveller community.

# THE TASKFORCE ON TRAVELLER EDUCATION

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The cross-sectoral Taskforce not only included, representatives from teaching unions and a range of statutory and non-statutory organisations from all of Ireland, but very importantly, it also included Traveller parents.

Its terms of reference were:

1. To review the educational needs of Traveller children and the current delivery of services;
2. To consider best practice models;
3. To actively consult with members of the Traveller community in relation to the work of the Taskforce;
4. To make recommendations to improve educational access, attainment and outcomes for Traveller children in pre-school, primary, post-primary and youth provision;
5. To assist the Department to develop an agreed action plan for both the statutory and non-statutory sector to see how improved educational outcomes can be achieved by all children;
6. To monitor the action plan over a two year period on a six-monthly basis;
7. To inform the National Traveller Monitoring and Advisory Committee in the south of Ireland; and

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8. To ensure that recommendations for improvements are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Article 2: protection against discrimination;

Article 12: right to have a voice;

Article 28: education on the basis of equal opportunity;

Article 29: education with respect for child's parents, cultural identity, language and values; and

other relevant equality and human rights legislation;

The Taskforce established six thematic sub-groups to complete more detailed work and make recommendations in the following areas:

- Early Years and Transitions
- Special Educational Needs
- Interculturalism and Racism
- Primary Education
- Post-primary and Youth
- Further and Lifelong Learning and Skills for Life and Work

The thematic sub-groups engaged with Traveller families, children and young people in the course of their work. The recommendations from these six sub-groups which informed the high level recommendations of the Taskforce

are included in the **“TASKFORCE ON TRAVELLER EDUCATION – Report of the Taskforce to the Department of Education. August 2011”**.

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/taskforce\\_on\\_traveller\\_education\\_-\\_report\\_of\\_the\\_taskforce\\_to\\_the\\_department\\_of\\_education.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/taskforce_on_traveller_education_-_report_of_the_taskforce_to_the_department_of_education.pdf)

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### PRINCIPLES

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The Taskforce agreed that the following fundamental principles should be embodied in its report and should underpin the recommendations and actions:

- Every child is an equal child
- The expectations for Traveller children should be the same as for all others, including access to the full range of educational experiences free from racial discrimination and prejudice
- Outcomes for Traveller children should parallel the range of outcomes for all children
- Traveller parents have the same entitlements and responsibilities as all other parents
- All schools should be open to and welcoming of Traveller children
- Parents of Traveller children should have access to any school of their choice, on the same basis as any other parents, for the education of their children
- The Department has a key responsibility in ensuring the achievement of these outcomes

The Taskforce has an expectation that these principles will be met in ten years.

#### **Department of Education Response**

The Department accepts, agrees with and endorses these principles which underpin the following actions.

# ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF TRAVELLER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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Both the Taskforce and the Department are clear that Traveller children are not to be blamed for their poor educational outcomes and that their rights and welfare must be core. The following actions set out the Department's child centred strategic approach to addressing the high level recommendations of the Taskforce on Traveller Education and tackling the barriers to Traveller educational achievement. This document however is merely the beginning of the process which will be taken forward by the regional Traveller Educational Support Service (TESS) in partnership with key stakeholders.

## 1. STRATEGIC DELIVERY AND PARTNERSHIP

### Taskforce Recommendation 1.1

A consistent, co-ordinated approach across all areas should be developed to promote the improved access, participation and attendance of Traveller children and young people in all formal and informal educational settings. This should include after school and youth activities, with actions identified for DE, Education and Library Boards (ELBs), Non Government Organisations (NGOs, Traveller Support Groups (TSGs) and Traveller families.

### Department of Education Response

The Department and Education and Library Boards (ELBs) recognise that current provision of Traveller Education Support varies from Board to Board. The five Boards have commenced the process of establishing a regional

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Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) to provide a more flexible, consistent, effective approach across all phases of education. It is aimed to have the regional Service fully operational by April 2013 as part of the new Education and Skills Authority (ESA).

The TESS will develop a delivery plan with three key elements:

- developing the capacity of schools to support the learning outcomes of Traveller children and young people;
- developing the capacity of schools to work together on a cluster basis to maximise their delivery of effective education for all Traveller children and young people in their area; and
- maximising the involvement of key stakeholders including Traveller parents and partner agencies.

The delivery plan will contain the detail of how the high level Action Framework will be delivered. It will address the detailed recommendations of the six thematic sub-groups of the Taskforce and of the ETI and build on identified good practice in formal and informal education, both locally and in other jurisdictions. Data on Traveller access, enrolment, attainment, attendance and advancement will be used to establish a baseline position, measure improvements and monitor the success of actions.

Traveller children, families and Traveller Support Groups will be consulted prior to the full implementation of the TESS delivery plan in 2013.

### **Taskforce Recommendation 1.2**

The draft action plan should be developed by the end of 2011. It must grasp the opportunity to deliver real progress for Traveller children. In developing the plan the Department should carefully consider the detailed

recommendations of the six thematic sub-groups of the Taskforce and of the Education and Training Inspectorate. The actions should build on good practice where it is occurring as highlighted by the sub-group reports and in Chapter 5 of this report.

### **Department of Education Response**

The detailed recommendations of the six thematic sub-groups of the Taskforce on Traveller Education and the ETI mainly relate to the operational delivery of Traveller education support.

This Action Framework addresses the high level strategic recommendations. The TESS delivery plan will address the operational recommendations and build on identified good practice, both locally and in other jurisdictions.

### **Taskforce Recommendation 1.3**

There must be active engagement and participation with Traveller children and young people and their families on the draft action plan and as an on going process.

### **Department of Education Response**

The Department agrees that the participation, co-operation and commitment of Traveller families and pupils are crucial. Only by working with Travellers will we together improve the educational outcomes of Traveller children. The Department and Education and Library Boards/ESA will commission the TESS to undertake consultation with Traveller families, mainly through schools and in partnership with voluntary and community sector organisations.

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### **Taskforce Recommendation 1.4**

Improving the educational attainment of Travellers is a significant element in reducing existing inequalities and encouraging their full inclusion in society. However, equality and social inclusion requires an integrated, collaborative approach across the statutory sector and with partners outside government.

A strategic group which includes representatives from health, education, employment, housing, the Traveller Support Movement and any other relevant organisations is necessary to facilitate a partnership approach and sharing of good practice in tackling barriers to Traveller equality and inclusion. This could be achieved by reconstituting the Traveller thematic group of the Racial Equality Forum.

### **OFMDFM Response**

We agree on the importance of an integrated, collaborative approach across the statutory sector and with partners outside government. To this end, OFMDFM will reinstate the Thematic Group on Travellers' Issues within the Racial Equality Forum. The group will include representatives from health, education, employment, housing, the Traveller Support movement and any other relevant organisations. This will facilitate a partnership approach and sharing of good practice in tackling barriers to Traveller equality and inclusion.

OFMDFM will give consideration to who should chair and provide secretarial support to the group with a view to convening a first meeting in September 2012.

### **Taskforce Recommendation 1.5**

There should be a new structure to deliver the action plan and ensure meaningful Traveller involvement in the education sector. This would involve

reconstitution of the Forum for the Education of Travellers' Children to include key NGO members.

### **Department of Education Response**

The Forum for the Education of Traveller Children was formed in 1993 to bring together representatives of the five Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, ETI and DE. Its remit was to coordinate issues pertaining to statutory school education for Traveller children and to assist the Department in the delivery of the guidelines contained within DE Circular 1993/37 "Policy and Guidelines for the Education of Traveller Children". In 2001 a sub-group of the Forum was established which included 4 NGO members including representative(s) of the NI Traveller Movement.

Since the Taskforce made this recommendation, the process of establishing a regional Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) has begun with the aim of full operation by April 2013. The establishment of an Education and Skills Authority (ESA), which will replace the five Boards, and TESS removes the need for the Forum as constituted.

The high level policy and legislative actions within the Action Framework will be taken forward by DE. Key to the successful delivery of the overall Action Framework however will be the TESS Delivery Plan.

Promoting Traveller parental involvement and engagement and assisting Traveller parents to support their children's learning and achievement is a priority area for the TESS. The Department and Education and Library Boards recognise the key role which Traveller Support Groups and other NGOs play in engaging with Traveller families to promote their involvement in the education sector and in enabling their voices to be heard. However, there is not currently a regional Traveller Support Movement and Traveller Support Groups work only with Travellers in their own geographic area.

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As a very temporary bridging arrangement, pending the development of regional arrangements with Traveller Support and other organisations, the TESS will initially promote parental involvement and engagement through the Traveller Support Groups who are already members of the Southern Area Action with Travellers (SAAT). All available channels for engaging with Traveller parents in other areas will be explored.

SAAT is a multi-agency, multi-sectoral alliance committed to improving the health, education and wellbeing of Travellers in the Southern area where 48% of the Traveller population live.

### **Taskforce Recommendation 1.6**

This new structure should connect with evolving structures focussed on multiculturalism and appropriate education support for minority ethnic children so that in the longer term policy and practice should focus more on Traveller children as a specific constituency within all minority ethnic children.

### **Department of Education Response**

The evolving regional Traveller Education Support Service will undertake a process of joint planning with the regional Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS) and the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) Working Group with the aim of aligning and integrating practice by 2015.

## 2. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### Taskforce Recommendation 2.1

The action plan must be adequately monitored and resourced and should include target dates and responsibility for delivery for improvements in Traveller access, attainment, attendance, enrolment and advancement. Actions to be taken should be based on firm evidence with collection and further analysis of data to enable monitoring of outcomes and evaluation of actions.

### Department of Education Response

This Action Framework has been developed and launched during an extremely challenging financial period for the Executive and the Department. In these circumstances it is realistic to assume that there will be very limited additional investment to support its implementation. However this does not mean that the desired improvements in educational outcomes for Traveller pupils cannot be achieved. The Department is already making a very considerable investment of over £1.6 million per year, over and above mainstream allocation funding, in Traveller education and the challenge will be to make innovative and effective use of these resources.

Furthermore, the Minister announced, as part of his Autumn Statement to the Assembly on 26th September 2011, that he would instigate a review of the current funding arrangements to schools. Any revised funding arrangements will be fit for purpose in the Department's drive for a sustainable estate and sufficiently address social need as well as being consistent with and supportive of Departmental policy objectives.

A table of Proposed Actions which includes high level targets, target dates and responsibility for delivery is attached at Annex A. Detailed targets will be

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## **The Traveller Child in Education Action Framework**

included in the evidence based operational delivery plan developed by the regional TESS.

Data on Traveller access, enrolment, attainment, attendance and advancement will be used to establish a baseline position and will continue to be collected and analysed to measure improvements and monitor the success of actions.

Monitoring of the Action Framework and the Delivery Plan will be carried out biannually by a small Monitoring and Review Group including , Department of Education and Skills (DES), ETI and ELB/ESA representation at a senior level. The process for nominating the NGO/TSG representation on this Group will be agreed by the Thematic Group on Travellers' Issues within the Racial Equality Forum.

The Monitoring and Review Group will report progress biannually to the Taskforce on Traveller Education and the Thematic Group on Travellers' issues to ensure that improving the educational attainment of Travellers is set in a wider strategic context in challenging barriers to Traveller equality.

### 3. ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

#### **Taskforce Recommendation 3.1**

Information should be provided to Traveller families on educational provision, opportunities and services, their rights in relation to education and how to access appropriate funding to enable young people to go on to further education.

#### **Department of Education Response**

The evolving TESS will work with schools, families and other stakeholders with an interest in educational provision during 2012 to identify a range of communication methods, including the use of electronic media, to improve the provision of information to Traveller children and young people and their families.

#### **Taskforce Recommendation 3.2**

Best practice to support Traveller children and young people's transitions from pre-school to primary school, primary to post-primary school and post-primary to further education should be identified and disseminated.

#### **Department of Education Response**

The Department and ELBs recognise that the transition between education stages is a difficult time for many pupils including Travellers. An inter-Board strategy to improve attendance among Traveller pupils will be agreed by December 2012. The strategy will include specific transition support programmes for use across all school sectors.

### 4. IMPROVED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

#### Taskforce Recommendation 4.1

Reasons for school absence should be analysed, monitored and addressed. ETI has found that when Traveller children attend on a regular basis they achieve commensurate with their peers.

#### Department of Education Response

The ETI 2008 evaluation of Traveller Education in the Five Education and Library Boards found that almost all Traveller children, as they progress through the school system, attend school less often than their peers and fail to benefit from full-time education. This is still the case. Over 90% of Traveller children have attendance rates below the overall attendance rate for non-Traveller children.

The Department recognises that improved attendance alone will not transform Traveller education but without significantly improved attendance Traveller pupils will always struggle to achieve.

In 2010/11 the level of unauthorised absence of Traveller children from primary schools was 18.0% (**nearly 13 times greater than the general school population**). In post-primary schools the level of unauthorised absence of Travellers of statutory school age was 32.7% (**almost 12 times greater than the post-primary average for all pupils**).

Traveller pupil attendance data held by the Department and Education and Library Boards will be analysed by June 2012. Using this analysis as a baseline, an inter-Board strategy to improve the attendance of Traveller pupils will be agreed by December 2012.

The Department of Education has commissioned research to identify effective practice in promoting attendance in schools serving disadvantaged areas. The findings of the research will inform the development of guidance for schools by December 2012.

### **Taskforce Recommendation 4.2**

Para 3 (3) of Schedule 13 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 which relates to the school attendance requirement for a child who has no fixed abode and whose parent's trade or business requires him to travel from place to place should be reviewed.

### **Department of Education Response**

Article 45 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 places a duty on the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational need he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Sub-paragraph 3 (3) of Schedule 13 of the Order states *"Where, in any proceedings brought against a parent on the ground that a child who is a registered pupil at a school has failed to attend that school regularly, it is proved that the child has no fixed abode, sub-paragraph (2)(b) shall not apply but the parent shall be entitled to be acquitted if he proves that he is engaged in any trade or business of such nature to require him to travel from place to place and the child has attended (at the school at which he was a registered pupil) as regularly as the trade or business of the parent permitted provided that, in the case of a child who has attained the age of six years, he has so attended on at least one hundred days during the period of twelve months ending on the date on which the proceedings were instituted."*

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## *The Traveller Child in Education* **Action Framework**

Schools are required to be in operation for 200 days less 5 optional closure days leaving a total of at least 195 operational days. A pupil who only attends for 100 days per year is therefore missing almost half of his schooling.

The Department will review sub-paragraph 3 (3) during 2012. Views will be sought from stakeholders during the consultation on this draft Action Framework.

## 5. AMBITIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

### Taskforce Recommendation 5.1

Careers advice, education and guidance to Traveller young people should take account of Travellers' 'world of work' but also encourage them to widen their horizons and ambitions.

### Department of Education Response

Key to the joint Department of Education/Department for Employment and Learning careers strategy is the aspiration that young people will develop the skills and confidence to make informed decisions about their education, training and employment options. This will enable them to make the most of their life choices and follow the careers path which suits them best.

The Careers Service has in place partnership agreements with post primary schools to support the schools' careers education programmes. These agreements allow schools, in conjunction with careers advisers, the opportunity to select from a suite of careers services appropriate to the needs, hopes and aspirations of all pupils including those young people from the Traveller community.

Careers advisers are professionally trained to work with all client groups to ensure that they are supported to become effective careers decision makers. To support their work, a fact sheet on Traveller culture, self-employment and family employment patterns and lifestyles will be developed by the TESS in partnership with TSGs and the Equality Commission and made available on-line as a free to download training and advice resource for careers advisers and teachers across all sectors.

Only 14 Traveller young people sought advice from careers advisers in 2010/11. In June 2012 the TESS will undertake a survey of current uptake of

## The Traveller Child in Education Action Framework

careers advice by Traveller pupils to establish a baseline which will inform a cross-sectoral workshop, working group and future action plan. The TESS, schools and Traveller support groups all have a role in encouraging Traveller pupils to make use of the careers services available.

### **Taskforce Recommendation 5.2**

Schools must have an expectation that Traveller children and young people will achieve their potential and parents should be encouraged to have high expectations of their children's achievement and that their education should continue while they are travelling.

### **Department of Education Response**

The Department's over-arching strategy for raising standards and tackling underachievement is "Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement" (ESaGS). Supporting pupils who face greater barriers to learning and progressing than their peers is an integral part of the school improvement agenda and at the heart of a school's work to raise standards is school development planning.

Schools are required by legislation to prepare School Development Plans setting targets for improvement following a process of self-evaluation. A School Development Plan must include information on the school's strategies for providing for the special, additional, or other individual needs of pupils. One of the ESaGS indicators of effective school performance used is '*A school culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists – with clear expectations that **all** pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability*'.

The ETI, in the course of school inspections, evaluates and reports on the quality of school development planning including a school's processes for setting challenging targets and improving outcomes for all pupils.

The evolving Traveller Education Support Service is working with other partners within the Southern Education and Library Board to develop a linkage programme with schools to review the performance of Traveller children throughout the year. The linkage programme is designed to connect schools with established good practice to those requiring mentoring and modelling support. The regional Traveller Education Support Service will consider how this programme can be rolled out across all areas beginning September 2013.

During the 2014/15 school year, the Department will assess the information that has been gathered through this programme to consider whether the introduction of Personal Education Plans for Traveller children, with clear targets, actions and responsibilities to respond to each child's needs, would be beneficial.

All parents, including Traveller parents, have a statutory duty to ensure that their children receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Promoting parental involvement and engagement and assisting parents to support their children's learning is a priority area for the TESS. Traveller Support Groups who work with, and have a relationship with, Traveller parents also have a responsibility to consider the contribution they can make to promote a positive attitude towards education.

Nomadism is an integral part of Traveller culture and should not be seen as an obstacle to education. The TESS will work through schools and Traveller Support Groups to encourage nomadic Traveller families to enrol their children in other schools when they are away from their base school and (where appropriate) encourage schools to facilitate the transfer of school records.

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### 6. INCLUSION, INTEGRATION AND INTERCULTURALISM

#### **Taskforce Recommendation 6.1**

The important role of teachers in the education of all children is key and building their capacity to develop an inclusive ethos and deliver change through Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development is crucial to the success of any action plan.

#### **Department of Education Response**

The Department agrees that the role of Principals and teachers in the education of all children is key. Education and Library Boards are currently piloting various forms of training and development for teachers on how to develop an inclusive ethos.

The Department of Education will establish an education sector working group by June 2012 to consider how the learning from these pilots and other existing training and capacity building initiatives can be aligned to deliver a common capacity building curriculum on inclusion with the aim of improving consistency and quality and reducing duplication.

The Department is also currently developing a strategy and implementation plan for the way forward for teacher education and is considering the creation of a coherent framework for teacher professional development which will include building the capacity of teachers to deal effectively with increasingly inclusive classrooms in terms of academic ability, social issues and personal needs.

## **Taskforce Recommendation 6.2**

Consistent regional anti-racism training and high quality learning materials which reflect Traveller culture and heritage should be available to school Governors and school leaders and as part of Initial Teacher Education and the Continuing Professional Development of teaching and non-teaching staff.

## **Department of Education Response**

The education sector working group referred to in the response to 6.1 will also examine currently available inclusion, diversity, positive images and good relations resources and learning materials targeted at teaching and non-teaching staff to ensure that they support the agreed capacity building curriculum.

The aim of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is to develop key competences to enable beginning teachers to deliver the Revised NI Curriculum. The time available for training students is, however, limited, particularly on the one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course. There is therefore a limit to the range of issues that can be covered during ITE. Whilst issues such as diversity and inclusion are covered to some extent during ITE, it is considered that these areas can be addressed in more depth during a teacher's in-service training.

## **Taskforce Recommendation 6.3**

Where it exists, the practice of providing Traveller specific school transport should be reviewed.

## **Department of Education Response**

Traveller specific school transport has been provided for many years mainly to schools in the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) from within

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and beyond the BELB area. This practice was put in place in response to the case that had been made over the years that the provision of transport to Traveller children ensured attendance at school and reduced the risk of bullying on the journey to and from school.

However despite the provision of specific transport, Traveller attendance at primary schools in the BELB area is the lowest of any Board and the average Traveller attendance at Belfast post-primary schools was only 47.2% in 2009/10 and 48.5% in 2010/11.

The Taskforce was of the view that the practice of providing Traveller specific school transport was a barrier to social and educational inclusion and should be reviewed.

The Department and Education and Library Boards will carry out a review of this practice by February 2013. A full impact assessment will form part of the review and views will be sought from CCMS, ELBs, schools, Traveller Support Groups and Traveller families.

## 7. ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

### Taskforce Recommendation 7.1

Schools, ELBs, NGOs and TSGs should improve engagement with Traveller parents to build trust, improve Travellers' sense of belonging and inclusion within the school community and encourage a positive attitude towards education and children's participation in all levels of education, including pre-school. Evidence indicates that 70% of a child's outcomes are dependent on parents/carers who need to be supported.

### Department of Education Response

The November 2008 ETI report on "An Evaluation of Traveller Education in the Five Education and Library Boards" stated that the evidence gathered for the evaluation indicated the need for a stronger shared responsibility between education stakeholders and the Traveller community.

Pupils and their parents have a responsibility to make best use of the opportunities provided by 12 years of compulsory education. Schools too need the participation and active support of parents and the community to ensure that children attend school, co-operate with their teachers and other staff, complete their homework and prepare for examinations.

Gaining the trust, commitment and co-operation of Traveller families is therefore essential to improving the educational outcomes of Traveller pupils. The Department of Education Circular 2010/15, which was issued to all schools and Education and Library Boards in August 2010, highlighted the importance of home-school liaison with Traveller parents. The circular gives examples of practical measures to improve this and encouraged schools to take these measures wherever possible.

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Promoting Traveller parental involvement and engagement and assisting Traveller parents to support their children's learning and achievement is a priority area for TESS and will be reflected in its delivery plan.

A pilot project promoting the engagement of Traveller parents in their children's learning is being developed in the Southern Education and Library Board area. The learning from this pilot, and successful interventions elsewhere, will be disseminated to schools from 2013 onwards.

The TESS will also trial the use of audio books and other web-based audio visual resources, to enable Traveller parents with low levels of literacy to engage with their children's learning, in a selection of schools from September 2012 onwards.

Traveller Support Groups who work with, and have a relationship with, Traveller parents also have a responsibility to consider the contribution they can make to promoting a positive attitude towards education and improving the educational chances of Traveller children.

### **Taskforce Recommendation 7.2**

The educational attainment of all Traveller children and young people, including those with special educational needs, should be developed, promoted and supported through flexible learning opportunities that meet their needs and abilities. Traveller young people should be made aware of the wide range of courses available under the Entitlement Framework from September 2013.

### **Department of Education Response**

Supporting pupils who face greater barriers to learning and progressing than their peers is an integral part of the school improvement agenda

and one of the ESaGS indicators of effective school performance used is *'A commitment exists to ensuring that all children follow an educational pathway which is appropriate to them in a school or through a collaborative arrangement with another school, FE College or other provider'*.

Within the current Special Educational Needs (SEN) framework, a comprehensive SEN capacity building programme has been rolled out to schools since the 2010/11 school year. A detailed SEN resource file has also been produced and has been made available to every school. This has aimed to ensure that all schools are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage the needs of every pupil with SEN and/or disability.

A pilot e-learning project is currently being delivered by a number of schools in the Southern Education and Library Board to groups of pupils including Travellers. The regional TESS will review the findings of the pilot, beginning September 2013, and consider its expansion.

Meeting the needs of all young people from Key Stage 4 is the core objective of the entitlement framework policy. The Entitlement Framework (EF) will guarantee all learners, from SEN to most gifted and talented, no matter where they go live or the type of school they attend, access to a broad and better balanced range of courses that are relevant to their needs, aptitudes, interests and future job prospects, starting with a minimum number of courses from 2013. The EF seeks to provide greater equality of access to young people facing barriers to learning or disadvantage.

The Department is currently revising the Regulations that set out the information which Boards of Governors of schools must make available to schools each year to parents and the public. It is proposed that the revised Regulations will require a school to publish details in their annual prospectus of a list of the courses provided for pupils in key stage 4 and for pupils over compulsory school age. It is also proposed that the information will have to

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be made available on the school's website and copies made available at the school.

The Department and TESS will work with schools, families and other stakeholders with an interest in educational provision during 2012 to identify a range of communication methods, including the use of electronic media, to improve the provision of information to Traveller children and young people and their families. Consideration of information on the Entitlement Framework will be included in this work.

The TESS will also continue to liaise with ELB/ESA officers, post primary career teachers, Traveller parents and young people to ensure that careers advice and support in schools takes into account the Traveller "world of work" and maximises on potential within the Entitlement Framework.

## EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

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Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 requires all public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to the north of Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities must also, in carrying out their functions, relating to the north of Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or religious group.

We have carried out an Equality and Human Rights Screening on the draft Traveller Child in Education Action Framework and concluded that it is not necessary to conduct an equality impact assessment because no equality issues have been identified.

The Equality and Human Rights Screening form has been published on the Department's website for information. [www.deni.gov.uk/index/about-the-department/equality-and-human-rights/85-about-the-department/equality-policies-being-screened-pg.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/about-the-department/equality-and-human-rights/85-about-the-department/equality-policies-being-screened-pg.htm)



## GLOSSARY

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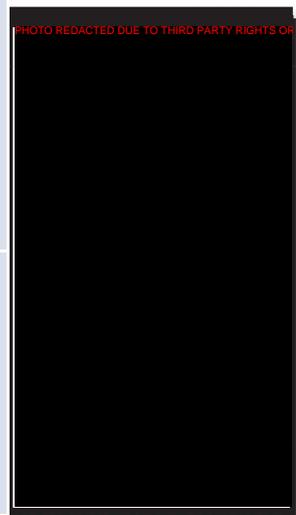
BELB	Belfast Education and Library Board
CRED	Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DES	Department of Education and Skills
EF	Entitlement Framework
ELB	Education and Library Board
ESA	Education and Skills Authority
ESaGS	Every School a Good School
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
IDS	Inclusion and Diversity Service
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PfY	Programme for Youth
SAAT	Southern Area Action with Travellers
SELB	Southern Education and Library Board
SEN	Special Educational Needs
TESS	Traveller Education Support Service
TSG	Traveller Support Group

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## The Traveller Child in Education Action Framework

Key Area	Action	Timescale	Output	Action By
<b>Strategic Delivery and Partnership</b>	A regional Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) will be established	By April 2013	A consistent, co-ordinated approach to promoting improved school access, participation and attendance of Traveller children	ELBs/ESA
	The TESS will implement a delivery plan, building on identified good practice, to address the detailed recommendations of the Taskforce and the ETI. The delivery plan will include detailed targets and performance measures.	Commencing April 2013	Improved partnership approach between key stakeholders including families  Improved capacity of schools to support the learning outcomes of Traveller pupils	TESS
	A process of consultation with the Traveller community will take place, with the assistance of a range of partners including schools, voluntary and community sector organisations	Commencing October 2012	Improved engagement with Traveller children and young people and their families	DE and TESS
	The Thematic Group on Travellers Issues within the Racial Equality Forum will be reconstituted	By September 2012	An integrated, collaborative approach on Travellers' issues	OFMDFM
	The TESS will develop arrangements for engaging with Travellers across the region in the delivery of the Action Framework and Delivery Plan	Commencing September 2012	Meaningful Traveller engagement in education	TESS
	TESS will undertake a process of joint planning with IDS and CRED to align and integrate practice on inclusion.	By 2015	Policy and practice on the education and inclusion of Traveller children integrated into wider multiculturalism policy and practice.	TESS IDS CRED ESA

Key Area	Action	Timescale	Output	Action By
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	A Monitoring and Review Group will be established to monitor the Action Framework and the TESS Delivery Plan	By April 2013	Assurance on delivery and outputs of the Action Framework	DE
<b>Access to Educational Opportunities</b>	DE and TESS will work with stakeholders to identify a range of communication methods to improve information to Traveller children, young people and families.	During 2012	Improved Traveller understanding of an access to educational provision, and opportunities	DE TESS
	ELBs/ESA will agree an inter-Board Traveller attendance strategy which will include specific transition support programmes for use across all school sectors.	By December 2012	Improved support during Traveller children's transitions between school sectors.	ELBs/ESA
<b>Improved School Attendance</b>	Traveller pupil attendance data held by DE and ELBs will be analysed to inform an inter-Board strategy to improve attendance.	Analysis by June 2012. Attendance strategy agreed by December 2012.	Improved attendance at school by Traveller pupils	DE ELBs
	DE will review legislation which allows the children of a parent travelling on business to attend school only 100 days per year.	During 2012	Clarity on the school attendance requirements for Traveller pupils.	DE
<b>Ambitions and Expectations</b>	The TESS, schools, careers advisers and TSGs will work together to encourage Traveller pupils to access well informed careers services to help them make effective careers decisions appropriate to their needs, hopes and aspirations.	Commencing June 2012	Traveller pupils having wider ambitions and making informed decisions relevant to their needs, aptitudes interests and future job prospects.	TESS Careers advisers Schools TSGs



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Key Area	Action	Timescale	Output	Action By
	In the course of school inspections, ETI will continue to evaluate and report on the quality of school development planning, including a school's processes for setting challenging targets and improving outcomes for all pupils.	Ongoing	Schools expect Traveller pupils to achieve their potential	Schools ETI
	The TESS will consider how a linkage programme with schools to review the performance of Traveller pupils throughout the year can be rolled out to all schools.	Beginning September 2013	Improved ongoing focus on the potential and progress of Traveller pupils	TESS schools
	DE will assess the information gathered through the linkage programme to consider whether a Personal Education Plan for each Traveller pupil would be beneficial.	During the 2014/15 school year.	Actions identified to respond to each Traveller pupil's educational needs.	DE
	A priority area in the TESS delivery plan will be promoting parental involvement and engagement and assisting parents to support their children's learning.	Commencing April 2013	Improved Traveller parental commitment to and support for their children's learning	TESS Traveller parents
	Traveller Support Groups and other NGOs who work with, and have a relationship with Traveller parents have a responsibility to consider how they can help to promote a positive attitude towards education and encourage Traveller pupils to make use of the careers services available to them.	Ongoing	Improved Traveller parental commitment to their children's learning.  Traveller pupils have wider ambitions and horizons.	TSGs NGOs

Key Area	Action	Timescale	Output	Action By
Inclusion Integration and Interculturalism	DE will set up an education sector working group to examine: 1) how inclusion and diversity training and capacity building initiatives for school leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff can be aligned into a common curriculum; and 2) currently available inclusion, diversity, positive images and good relations resources and learning materials to ensure that they support the agreed capacity building curriculum	By June 2012	Improved consistency and quality of training, capacity building and resources and reduction of duplication.	DE
	The practice of providing Traveller specific school transport will be reviewed. A full impact assessment will be carried out as part of the review.	By February 2013	To make an appropriate recommendation, on the basis of the review, with regard to Traveller children and school transport.	DE ELBs/ESA
Attainment and Achievement	Learning from a pilot project in the SELB area promoting the engagement of Traveller parents in their children's learning will be disseminated to all schools.	From 2013	Improved Traveller parental commitment to and support for improving their children's educational achievements	TESS Schools Traveller parents
	Revised Regulations will require schools to publish in their Prospectus a list of the courses provided for pupils in key stage 4 and beyond.	2012	Traveller young people will be aware of the wide range of courses available	DE
	DE and TESS will work with schools, families and other stakeholders to identify a range of communication methods to improve the provision of information on education provision, opportunities and services to Traveller children and young people and their families.	During 2012	Improved Traveller knowledge and understanding of the opportunities and support available	DE TESS Schools Families Other Stakeholders

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