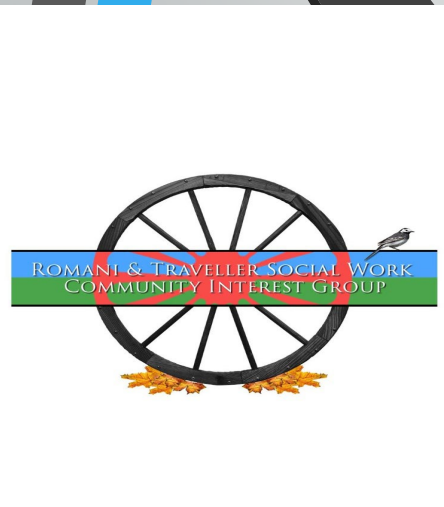


**BASW UK CONFERENCE June 19<sup>th</sup> 2024**

# **‘Including the Excluded’. Social Work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities**

- **Dr Peter Unwin, Principal Lecturer in Social Work. RTSWA**



# BASW INITIATIVES 2020

Motion passed by BASW UK AGM – ‘This Annual General Meeting calls on BASW Council and Executive to take a strategic approach to righting this imbalance in our profile, working together with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to bring about mutual understanding and respect for each other’s cultures’

GRTSW Association Formed –to promote social justice / inclusion / best practice (from 2023 ‘Romani and Traveller Social Work Association’)

Webinars / Seminars /Practice Guides / Co-produced Research /Lobbying

So, this is a turning point for social work and **WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY!!**



# **My Big Fat Message to Social Work**

# ROADS FROM THE PAST

- <https://youtu.be/1bhBbMrF8Zo>

## Social Work Should Challenge Discrimination

- Social workers are required to challenge the ways in which individuals and institutions discriminate against others (BASW 2014; IFSW and IASSW 2018) - until very recently we have not collectively done this with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (Kidd, 2020)
- However, this can 'feel risky' (Dunk-West 2013, p.86) and require 'courage' (Trevithick 2012, p.347).
- Research has detailed the extent of risk, deprivation and social exclusion among children and young people of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (Parry et al. 2004; Parry et al. 2007; Cemlyn et al. 2009; Equality and Human Rights Commission 2016).

# The Police Act 2022

- November 2019 – Home Office Consultation launched **‘Strengthening Police Powers to Tackle Unauthorised Encampments’**
- Proposed to introduce new legislation to **change trespass from a civil to a criminal offence and/or strengthen police powers** under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- The **Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act became law in 2022**

# Police Act 2022 - Powers

- Powers to seize a vehicle (which can constitute a family home, including its possessions) **for up to three months from date of seizure or until the conclusion of proceedings** if initiated
- Maximum penalty is **3 months imprisonment and/or fine of up to £2,500**
- Seizure of vehicle/possessions can occur where a constable has reasonable grounds to suspect, or reasonably suspects that a person has met the conditions for an offence
- The 'reasonable excuse' defence enables a person to escape liability where they can show a reasonable excuse for not complying as soon as was practicable
- **The inclusion of subjective categories 'damage, disruption and distress' could trigger use of these powers simply where an encampment merely exists, not because of any particular behaviour**

# What do you think were the drivers behind this Act?

- What will its impact be on families?
- How does it fit with social work values and Codes of Ethics?



# Challenges to Social Work if we are to Include the Excluded

- How well do social workers know their local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities?
- What policies/ protocols / training do you have in your workplace?
- How might safeguarding standards be interpreted within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture?
- Would friends and family be looked to as potential carers/adopters if a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller child was judged unable to live at home?
- Do services for disabled adults in mainstream society, compare with those for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities?
- Why is the suicide rate 6-7 times higher in Gypsy and Traveller communities? (Friends, Families and Travellers, 2020)

# THINK OF YOUR OWN ORGANISATION

- **WOULD A GYPSY, ROMA , TRAVELLER FAMILY USE YOUR SERVICE?**
- **IF NOT WHY NOT?**
- **HOW COULD YOU MAKE IT MORE LIKELY THAT THE SERVICE WOULD BE USED?**

# Developing Customised Resources

- BASW/GRTSWA (2022) Good Practice Guide – Supporting Gypsy , Traveller and Roma Families <https://www.basw.co.uk/what-we-do/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-edi-social-work/supporting-grt-communities>
- The Reflection, Objective, Movement and Action (ROMA) Model: A Framework for Restorative Supervision(2024)

# NEW TRAINING PACKAGE

New interactive awareness raising online training package (Overview and History/ Challenges/ Social Care/ Resources) now available for social workers (and fellow professionals), hopefully to become a core part of national SW Training offers...

- <https://ltsu.uk/External/GypsyRomaTraveller/Lesson1>
- <https://ltsu.uk/External/GypsyRomaTraveller/Lesson2>
- <https://ltsu.uk/External/GypsyRomaTraveller/Lesson3>
- <https://ltsu.uk/External/GypsyRomaTraveller/Lesson4>

## SELECTED REFERENCES

- BASW/GRTSWA (2022) Good Practice Guide – Supporting Gypsy , Traveller and Roma Families <https://www.basw.co.uk/what-we-do/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-edi-social-work/supporting-grt-communities> )
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- Traveller Movement (2017). *The last acceptable form of racism? The pervasive discrimination and prejudice experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities*  
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