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**Improving Access and Participation in Higher Education for Gypsies, Travellers, Roma, Showmen and Boaters:**

**Annual Report 2022**

Dr Carol Rogers

**Background**

Access to Higher Education amongst Gypsy, Travellers, Roma, Showmen and Boaters (GTRSB) is still relatively rare and what limited evidence exists suggests that community members experience significant barriers to access, retention, and attainment. Educational challenges begin early in life, proceeding through academic careers and are closely linked to broader levels of exclusion and poorer outcomes across the lifespan GTR people have the lowest levels of educational achievement of any ethnic group and are less likely to thrive in childhood. GTR children are more likely to be absent from formal education and to have ceased attendance by the age of 16.[[1]](#footnote-1) Furthermore community members experience the lowest outcomes in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2 and at GCSE (2022 GCSE Attainment 8 scores: Gypsy Roma 22.7% Irish Travellers 30%)[[2]](#footnote-2).

As part of a national policy focus on the social exclusion experienced by GTRSB communities, attention has more recently turned to how to improve the levels of engagement with Higher Education (and from HEIs) to support members of these communities, using access to HE, retention, and award outcomes as a proxy for social inclusion and enhanced opportunities for social mobility and economic wellbeing. In 2018, the Office for Students issued a briefing on supporting Widening Participation and Access issues impacting GTR students[[3]](#footnote-3) .

In September 2019 Buckinghamshire New University, in collaboration with Baroness Janet Whitaker, the Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsies, Travellers, and Roma (GTR) convened a workshop at the House of Lords to bring together a range of key stakeholders, HEIs, NGOs, and GTRSB graduates to explore what could be done to support widening participation aims[[4]](#footnote-4). The outcome was the development of the [GTRSB (Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen, Boater) into Higher Education Pledge](https://www.bucks.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-stand/gtrsb-higher-education-pledge). The Pledge aims to improve access and participation in higher education through positive engagement, celebration of best practice, and to create safe spaces for learning for GTRSB communities. Launched by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) in January 2021 universities, regulators, politicians, policy specialists, NGOs and GTRSB communities came together to establish the good practice in supporting students into and within Higher Education Pledge at an event attended by approximately 150 people.

This first annual report provides an update on Pledge activity for the 9 signatory institutions (as of March 2022), Buckinghamshire New University (BNU), Essex, Hull, Northumbria, Strathclyde, Sunderland and Winchester Universities, Nelson College, and The Institute of Contemporary Theatre (ICTtheatre Brighton).

The report is framed around the responses, key themes, and findings from a survey of the signatory institutions carried out in February 2022.

Since then, Anglia Ruskin University and University Centre Leeds have become a Pledge signatories with a number of other institutions in the process of signing up to the Pledge.

**Survey Analysis**

The analysis of the first annual survey of Pledge signatories is based on a 100% response rate from the nine signatory institutions.

**Question: On what date did your institution/organisation 'take the Pledge'? How long from discussions about taking the Pledge to formal adoption, did the process take (if known)**

The nine organisations that have signed the Pledge have done so between January 2020 and December 2021. As initial signatory and convening University BNU had strong support from the start including agreed activities such as the introduction of bursaries. For the other institutions, where identified, the process of taking the Pledge took between 4- 10 weeks for three institutions and approximately 6 months for 3 other institutions.

**Data Collection**

Data collection is a core element of the Pledge, aiming to increase contextual understanding of each institution by monitoring the number of Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater students and staff.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) are the designated data collection agency for both students and staff working in higher education in England. The categories used to collect ethnicity currently for GTRSB communities only include *Irish Traveller*, *Gypsy/Traveller* and a generic ‘*other ethnic background’*. Resulting in the exclusion of the broader range of Travelling people such as, Roma, Scottish Travellers, Welsh and New Travellers, Showmen and Boaters.

There is work in progress with HESA through their “Data Futures 22/23” programme to include a wider range of categories from August 2022 as listed below, adopting these would be an improvement however, these categories still exclude, Other Traveller e.g., New Traveller/Welsh Traveller and Boaters.

|  |
| --- |
| 163 - White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller |
| 164 - White - Gypsy or Traveller |
| 165 - White - Irish Traveller |
| 166 - White - Irish |
| 167 - White - Polish |
| 168 - White - Roma |
| 169 - White - Scottish |
| 170 - White - Showman / Showwoman |

The following questions relating to the monitoring and recording of ethnicity show variation across institutions for both students and staff in which categories are recorded. The majority but not all, record Romani/Gypsy and Irish Traveller as the most common categories of student numbers. Separation of categories to include all GTRSB groups is a work in progress across all of the signatory institutions, with the encouragement of self-identification for students ahead of that for staff. Institutional progress and activities towards this are identified here.

**Question: Which of the following categories of student/applicant ethnicity/heritage does your institution/organisation monitor and record?**

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**Question: Which of the following categories of staff ethnicity/cultural heritage does your institution/organisation monitor and record?**

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**Question: Are there any notable trends or changes in data numbers amongst either students/applicants or staff?**

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Notable trends identified increases in self-identification where separate categories to include Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boaters are used, rather than the more generic Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma categories. The following comments from institutions where identifiable, note increases, with a number of other signatories having made changes. It is too soon to comment on notable trends or changes in data.

*The number of GTRSB students who self-declared increased in 2021/22 when we introduced broader GTRSB separate categories on our enrolment form. (Sunderland)*

*Although numbers remain small there is year on year increase in students’ self-identification 5 on our own taught courses and 31 with the inclusion of partner college provision (BNU).*

*We have opened up conversations with students who were not comfortable disclosing that they came from a Roma/Gypsy ethnicity. This has seen an increase of students from this background, and we have found a number of students who have formed a small community of support within the College (Nelson College)*

**Question: What is the institution/ organisation doing to encourage GTRSB students and staff to self-identify?**

The Pledge provides a catalyst for promotional work to foreground GTRSB inclusion and positive representation and to encourage an increase in self-identification for both staff and students. The following are examples of institutional approaches to enabling and encouraging increased self-identification with survey responses falling into two key areas of work, data collection and monitoring and promotional activity to encourage positive and welcoming environments.

**Self-identification through data collection**

As noted in earlier questions data collection to improve self-identification is a work in progress for most institutions, with the following activities taking place.

*Staff provide ethnicity data upon application, students via UCAS applications, then self-declaration for GTRSB backgrounds via enrolment question (Winchester)*

*We directly ask this question to all new and returning students as part of our online enrolment form. We are promoting the support available to all students and are still developing these categories for staff (Sunderland).*

*Through data dashboards we can look at disproportionality and possible disparities in the data which will support our evaluation of confidence. We are looking at good practice examples in the sector. Our work in this area is still at desk-based research stage (Hull).*

*Changed ethnicity data collection categories for staff to include separate categories for GTRSB staff, students change in progress to include all GTRSB separate categories (BNU).*

*Northumbria introduced 'diversity monitoring' as part of enrolment forms for the first time from 21/22 year, which enables students to provide more nuanced detail about their diversity status, including GTRBS. To encourage disclosures, we link directly to the support provided by the Student Inclusion Team via the website (Northumbria).*

**Promotional activity to encourage positive and welcoming environments.**

The second thread emerging from this question relates to a broad range of promotional activities which links to the next set of questions.

*Taken the Pledge and created a bulletin [article] on one of our students from the GTRSB community and holding an event/fundraise for GTRSB month (Institute for Contemporary Theatre, ICTtheatre Brighton)*

*We have undertaken a lot of promotional work over the past 12 months to encourage staff and students to self-identify. We issued a press release when we signed the Pledge in January 2021, that was featured within The Herald newspaper (*[*https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19025931.strathclyde-university-Pledges-help-gypsy-traveller-roma-showmen-boater-communities/*](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19025931.strathclyde-university-pledges-help-gypsy-traveller-roma-showmen-boater-communities/)*) and on the University’s own website. Our commitment was also highlighted within the internal staff weekly newsletter. Promotional work to highlight this to our students involved a feature within the Student Union newsletter and through the University’s various social media platforms. We hope that the creation of a named contact for GTRSB students and applicants will also encourage students to self-identify (Strathclyde).*

*Northumbria have also promoted activities linked to GTRBS History month and wider EDI networks such as decolonising Northumbria in order to celebrate GTRSB communities and show Northumbria is a welcome environment (both staff and students).  
There is more work planned for the next academic year which focuses on refining categories students and staff can disclose, as well as more targeted support and awareness raising.*

*Recent promotions, through our internal student and staff facing communication platforms have included the Residence Life team, consisting of student staff members, promoting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month and the theme #MakeSomeSpace. Provided here was an opportunity for communities to learn more about the histories and cultures of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people. (Northumbria)*

*BNU have engaged in the following promotional activities including, the Pledge launch event where universities, regulators, politicians, policy specialists, NGOs and GTRSB communities came together to launch the good practice in supporting students into and within Higher Education was attended by more than 150 people.*

*A community member has been engaged as a research assistant to promote the Pledge and act as key contact and mentor for GTRSB students and staff.*

*Promotion of positive student experiences with a student sharing her experience through a short video clip.*

*Our EDI committee is proactively engaged in promoting and including GTRSB, currently working on an antigypsyism declaration. (Buckinghamshire New University)*

**Organisational and institutional culture, building a supportive and welcoming culture for GTRSB students and staff.**

This section of the report focuses on the core element of the Pledge promoting the development of safe spaces for GTRSB students and staff, for example having a designated named contact for working with GTRSB students to oversee workstreams/ attend regular training/EDI meetings etc. and encouraging the formation of GRTSB student and staff societies either locally or through regional groups of HEI’s.

**Question: Explain how the institution/organisation identifies and publicises support for GTRSB students and staff.**

Responses to this question identified common activities across signatory organisations, such as provision of specific bursary funding, HR and EDI committees involved in a variety of work to support both GTRSB students and staff, and the development of web pages and sharing of resources.

The social media platform Twitter is also being used effectively to raise awareness of and promote Pledge related activities and support for GTRSB students and staff across the signatory institutions and partner civil society organisations.

The examples below show the breadth of activity by institution.

*We contact every student who has identified as GTRSB to outline the support we offer and invite them to engage with us. We can devise a personalised support plan, based on individual needs, for each student. We promote the support available to all students as part of our student newsletters and other communications and prioritise GTRSB students for a financial bursary of £3,000. We have developed case studies so that our GTRSB students act as role models to inspire others.* [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1FhZ5KQ\_qY*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1FhZ5KQ_qY) *We have produced dedicated web pages to promote the support available.* [*https://search1.sunderland.ac.uk/s/search.html?collection=uos&query=GTRSB*](https://search1.sunderland.ac.uk/s/search.html?collection=uos&query=GTRSB) *We are engaging directly with our GTRSB students and other external stakeholders as we develop this support. We are still developing our support for GTRSB staff and are working with our EDI Manager and HR Team initially (Sunderland).*

*Given the stigma around GTRSB communities, we were not surprised that we had an initial lack of engagement from students following our initial press release and promotional work. Until the beginning of Academic Year 2021/22, we had no data to inform us on any GTRSB students to contact to discuss their needs for support, etc. Now that we are in a position to contact some of our GTRSB students, we have been working with them to discuss the best forms of support we can provide and what they would like to see us offer. However, we have found that a number of our students struggle with the time pressures of balancing their university work with their personal lives and therefore do not have much time to engage with us, as we seek to develop our support offerings with their input. Therefore, we are in the initial stages of applying for funding to employ one or two GTRSB students on a short- medium term part-time internship to properly compensate them for their time. We hope that this will be more fruitful and lead to good engagement with some students. We would aim to learn from these student interns to not only identify support needs, but also publicise these amongst their peers (Strathclyde).*

*Initiatives and actions plans have been delayed. Our Regional Uni connect partners are working within the community with years 9-13 (Hull).*

*Celebrating GTRBS student achievement with An Honorary Doctorate awarded to Janie Cordona MBE, a Romani Gypsy for her community work and a BA (Hons) Fashion student was chosen to receive a significant scholarship from The British Fashion Council. The receipt of this funding makes this student not only the first BNU student to receive the prestigious grant, but also the first person of Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater (GTRSB) heritage to do so (BNU).*

*Work has been ongoing for 18 months to enhance the EDI support for students from all underrepresented groups, including GTRSB. There is a new Student Inclusion Team in place working on targeted support in 1-1 and group formats, financial support, paid work opportunities, partnership with staff and staff training and data development. All of this enables us to raise awareness of the student groups which may have to overcome additional barriers, and support staff to address these. More info about the team can be found here:* [*https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/study-at-northumbria/support-for-students/student-inclusion-and-success*](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/study-at-northumbria/support-for-students/student-inclusion-and-success) *. One example of success to date from the awareness raising work is a GTRSB student getting in touch and becoming involved in Pledge work which is another small but positive development. We are currently in the process of working with GTRSB identified students to set up an informal peer support network in line with our group support model (Northumbria).*

*The College has promoted its GTRSB Pledge on social media and learning platforms for all stakeholders to see as well as putting up posters around the College hallways. The GTRSB Pledge is also mentioned by the College Principal during the induction event for all students (Nelson College).*

*Recent promotions, through our internal student and staff facing communication platforms have included the Residence Life team, consisting of student staff members, promoting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month and the theme #MakeSomeSpace. Provided here was an opportunity for communities to learn more about the histories and cultures of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people (Essex).*

*Current information on website for students’ bursaries - plans for dedicated webpage (Winchester)*

**Question: Please explain how the institution/organisation promotes a supportive and welcoming culture for GTRSB students and staff - please provide information about the most successful or well-received initiatives under this heading and whether this varies by staff or student responses.**

*We welcome everyone regardless of race, culture. We promote this quietly and offer bursaries to any GTRSB student who joins (ICTtheatre Brighton)*

*Conferences/guest talks/ student support package/ integration in unconscious bias /HR training (Winchester).*

*We have a range of support available for students which includes a named contact, financial support, 365-day accommodation and a support plan based on individual needs. Supporting GTRSB students is an integral part of our access and participation strategy and support for this important work is evident at all levels of the organisation - including the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive. We celebrated GRT History Month with a range of events for staff, students, and pupils / teachers in local schools. Our progress to date with the GTRSB into HE Pledge is reported at SMT meetings as well as our institutional Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Group. We are developing support for staff. We did work closely with an academic colleague who was carrying out some research relating to GTRSB communities and educational attainment, but unfortunately this colleague has moved on to a new role outside the university. At the beginning of each academic year, students who have self-identified as belonging to a GTRSB community are contacted by the GTRSB Named Contact with an introduction/welcome to the university and information on the support available to them. They are also invited to meet (either online or face-to-face) with their named contact should they wish to do so (Sunderland).*

*The University has recently established a Race Equality Working Group and we are keen to ensure that GTRSB students and staff members are represented within this. The group are working to ensure that the University’s educational and employment provisions are conducive to all, irrespective of ethnicity. Further to this, we are currently reviewing our staff and student Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training modules with the consideration of how best we can incorporate GTRSB issues within our training (Strathclyde).*

*Our newly arrived EDI lead has some great contacts from the GRT community and has been involved with awareness raising video footage in the region (Hull).*

*GRT History Month/ Roma Holocaust Day and other significant dates are marked with events both externally and within the universities BAME staff network. A Romani Gypsy social work student linked with mentor from the Gypsy/Traveller social work association and a community member is in place to act as a mentor. The EDI committee are currently working on an antigypsyism statement (BNU).*

*GTRSB inequality is a part of the focus of our Decolonising Northumbria Network, our student inclusion consultants are also working with staff on barriers underrepresented groups can face and developing recommendations for how to improve. Decolonising Northumbria network, student inclusion schemes. We are currently working with a GTRSB identified student to submit a motion for a GTRSB equality officer to sit on the Students Union student council, who will be involved in running campaigns and will vote on debates and decisions affecting students. We have delivered one-off awareness raising training sessions for university staff and students based on our work in house, and we are currently organising training sessions for staff and students from Friends Families and Travellers. We’re also planning on looking at our e-learning content for staff and students in the future (Northumbria).*

*As we have been able to promote an open culture and reassure students that disclosing their ethnicity is not a disadvantage, we have been able to see more students welcoming the idea of this. We are also currently working on holding events, one of which will include International Romani Day (Nelson College)****.***

**Question: Does the institution/organisation have a named contact point for GTRSB students and potential students in place?**

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The majority of institutions(78%) have a named contact for GTRSB students in place, of those in progress one is an institution who joined the Pledge as an inaugural member in January 2021 the other has more recently taken the Pledge in December 2021.

**Outreach and engagement with local GTRSB communities and Inclusion, Celebration and Commemoration of GTRSB cultures and communities.**

This element of the Pledge involves having a distinct stream of work which focuses on GTRSB students within widening participation activities, for example strengthening links to schools/FE colleges or NGOs, working with local GTRSB communities, and developing or expanding mentoring opportunities for GTRSB graduates/students to work with members of their communities who are considering entering (or re-entering) HE.

**Question: Please list any engagement and outreach activities with local GTRSB communities. Please can you explain which you feel are the most successful of these activities and why.**

**Sunderland University**

*We worked with The Beacon of Light to arrange for this venue to be illuminated as part of our city-wide GRT History Month celebrations.*

*We have engaged with the Traveller Education Team at a local authority to identify areas of potential collaboration. We are hosting a visit for them on campus next month.*

*Over 1,000 pupils from local schools (including some GTRSB pupils) attended our GRT History Month outreach events hosted by Richard O'Neill. All schools who participated received signed copies of Richard's story books.*

*We have been working closely with a primary school in Darlington which has a high number of GTRSB pupils. We have delivered several sessions in school for pupils of all ages. We hope to host a campus visit later in the year. We have plans with this schools to develop a progressive outreach programme to develop the pupils' learning in future years.*

**Northumbria University**

*As a university we take a holistic approach to widening participation. We promote access schemes to underrepresented groups as part of our outreach work, including our supported progression scheme. We are pleased to say GTRBS students have now been included specifically within this for the 21/22 academic year onwards. This is a positive step, but we are early on in developing our practice around outreach. An action plan has been developed to highlight key steps and a Working Group is currently being established in order to take this forward.*

**University of Hull**

*Uniconnect in our region is working with our 4 neighbouring Local Authorities and the voluntary sector to undertake extensive mapping of local GTRSB communities has been underway since the Pledge was taken, exploring where are communities are based and gaining a better understanding of what is known in terms of commonalities of circumstances, attitudes & motivations, preferences, and educational trends. In particular identifying factors which it is either known, or which could reasonably be expected, to have an impact upon their ability to access WP/CEIAG activities and progress to HE.*

*• From this we have been able to identify which schools these students are attending and start to design bespoke interventions with these learners and their families. We are looking to enable local schools to lead and for us to offer support through grants/on request from local schools such as Cottingham High (close to Traveller site); Sirius North (identified through school census) also considering funding a GTR TA. Much of the GTR literature however suggests that schools are not trusted and that schools may be the problem.*

*• Planning a Roundtable event with interested local parties e.g., local authorities; local schools identified with GTR population to share our research; ask if willing to work with us; invite GTR representative. Following consultation, develop locally targeted resources (e.g., may need to be in another language for parents).*

*• Planning to work with other Uni Connects especially Go Higher West Yorkshire and LiNCHigher to develop videos and online resources for GTR students and community. Geographic boundaries of Uniconnect complicates the offer to this mobile population but one connected source of remote learning resources would offer continuity to these students.*

*• Developing work with our Further Education colleges. Much of the research suggests that due to disrupted learning, some GTR attempt to re-engage with learning through FE but find that they lack the necessary level 2 qualifications. This is a second key transition on which we have little data. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this may include boys looking for apprenticeships; practical courses such as joinery; hairdressing; healthcare; sports sciences. Schools census data does not cover FE students, but we could:*

*• Working with FE to explore what data colleges have on GTR. Do they record GTR applications? Admissions procedures that classify “GTR” as other may be unhelpful.*

*• See if they have identified GTR as potential recruitment gap, e.g., on access courses, level 2 courses*

*• Discreet Open days etc for young people and their families.*

**Strathclyde University**

*Currently we have a connection with a local primary school in an area of the city that has a high Roma population. We are looking to build upon this connection and deliver tailored outreach activities to this community through the primary school.*

*Our intention to employ one or two GTRSB students on a part-time internship is also part of our outreach strategy for 2022, with the interns working on creating relevant outreach activities and helping to deliver these to local GTRSB communities.*

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**Essex University**

*In support of our Annual Teachers and Advisers CPD week which was delivered 14 - 18 June 2021, Professor Margaret Greenfields, Buckinghamshire New University and Sherrie Smith, Director of Gypsies and Travellers Essex shared their personal experiences of higher education as a Romany Gypsy student, parent, researcher, and their role in wider participation community engagement. This session helped those attending to better understand how we can engage and work together to support access and retention in higher education for Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers.*

**Nelson College London**

*At this point in time, conducting outreach activities have been difficult for us across the board. But the Colleges' Marketing team has visited various canals to speak to the boater community about the College as well as marketing in areas around London that have a strong Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community like Dover and Margate*

**Buckinghamshire New University (BNU)**

*Some of the outreach activities we have organised or participated in include:*

*Pledge launch event where universities, regulators, politicians, policy specialists, NGOs and GTRSB communities came together to launch the good practice in supporting students into and within Higher Education was attended by more than 150 people.*

*Presenting the Pledge at a wide range of events, including universities, NEON, ACERT and British Association of Social Work (BASW) conference, Go Higher West Yorkshire research launch event and Showmen: Getting a Fair Education event, looking specifically at advancing representation and inclusion.*

*We have worked closely with FFT, ACERT, Future4Fairgrounds and other network partners to develop the Pledge for Schools.*

*Local community outreach is being developed and strengthened through the Pledge for schools.*

*Presenting the Pledge for schools at Joint BNU / ASTRA Teacher training conference for trainee and new teachers and the Rothschild Foundation funded ASPIRE Culturally Responsive Communities conferences.*

*An Exhibition and web profile for BNU fashion student showcasing his designs inspired by his Romany Gypsy heritage.*

**Question: Please list any examples of activities or resources your institution/organisation has engaged with since you 'Took the Pledge' that promote Inclusion, Celebration and Commemoration of GTRSB cultures.**

**Please can you also identify future plans under this heading and outline how you have come to identify activities/resources e.g., in collaboration with local community groups, or students, through the GTRSBintoHE Network etc.**

*I intend to roll out some training courtesy of FFT in Brighton to all staff during GTRSB month (ICTtheatre Brighton).*

*Our biggest project was our 'Opening the Doors' online conference last June as part of GRT History Month (Winchester).*

*GTRSB into HE Network has been an excellent source of information and networking. We have attended national conferences and contributed to these as a presenter, sharing our experiences and progress to date to encourage other universities to sign the Pledge. We have attended webinars, workshops, and other online events such as the ACERT Conference (Sunderland).*

*We celebrated GTRSB History Month in June 2021 and promoted it through our social media channels and website. We collated various GTRSB informational and educational resources on our website to share with our staff and students, while promoting events hosted by other HEIs and charitable organisations such as FFT. Our Named Contact has engaged with many CPD events (mostly promoted through the GTRSBintoHE network) to widen their knowledge of the issues facing GTRSB students in accessing HE, and how we can help surmount these barriers. We also used Glasgow Children’s University to provide some outreach activities to local primary and secondary school pupils, by inclusion of GTRSB educational activities in their quarterly newsletter (Summer 2021 issue). Links to newsletter content here: https://bit.ly/LearningScottishCant and https://bit.ly/GRTHM2021Comp. Glasgow CU member pupils get credits for completing these activities, which leads to awards, therefore incentivising the children to take part and learn something new – in this case about GTRSB communities. For GTRSB History Month 2022 we are planning to host our own events for our staff and students in collaboration with local community groups and are in the early stages of planning currently (Strathclyde).*

*GRTHM activities included a talk from Northumbria PhD graduate, playwright, and Irish Traveller Rosaleen McDonagh, and a radio broadcast/podcast (co‐produced and presented with GTRSB community members and Skimstone Arts), featuring songs, stories, spoken word pieces and poems which helped to raise awareness of the diverse learning and educational experiences of individuals from GTRSB backgrounds. We are currently planning further events for GRTHM in June 2022. We have utilised the HESA consultation and Advance HE Diversity Monitoring reports to advance our data collection around diversity (although these categories are still too aggregated). The plan is for the Working Group to be established this academic year to enhance these activities for 22/23 (Northumbria).*

*Since taking the Pledge the College has focused more internally as we have been able to identify a large population who fall under the ethnicities in the Pledge. The College will now work with the students to develop relevant outreach activities to support the communities. The College has also recruited a Recruitment and Widening Access Officer from the GTRSB community to support the students and promote the College. The Officer will also advise the College on any issues that students have raised and liaise them back to the College (Nelson College).*

*We have created a new role within the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service to engage with diverse student groups and increase both confidence and awareness of our services. The new role holder for our Diversity and Engagement Manager commenced in post in March 2022, and the University have appointed a Director of Inclusion. The Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service has consolidated an equality, diversity, and inclusion website for students, and it includes a webpage dedicated to GTRSB students which provides specific support and tailored services for the community. In addition, the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service is annually celebrating Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month through raising awareness of history, language and lived experiences of community members. GTRSB students can also opt in to receive a named advisor from the Wellbeing team who can provide guidance and tailored advice during their time at the University for extra support (Essex).*

*We host the GTRSB website which includes resources from a range of Pledge related events and resources shared via the GTRSB network which is affiliated to and available to Pledge signatories. We are currently adapting the Pledge for schools in collaboration with FFT, ACERT and other members of the network to be formally launched in June 2022. In conjunction with this we will be introducing the Pledge for schools and delivering cultural awareness training to conferences for local teacher training hub ASTRA and ASPIRE Multi Academy Trust. Other activities have included, a collective submission of evidence with NEON to the Department for Education select committee on educational barriers impacting GRT students. Ongoing consultation GuildHE and HEPI regarding race disparity briefings and with UCAS and the student loan company* relating to improving *accessibility of information and access for GTRSB students. Activities planned for GRT history month including an exhibition and web profile of our fashion students work with designs reflecting his Romany Gypsy heritage (BNU).*

**Question: What additional information or resources would your institution or organisation find it helpful to be able to access to support your work around the GTRSBintoHE Pledge?**

The aim of this question is to help to identify further activities required to continue to strengthen and develop the Pledge across the sector. The responses below indicate that stronger connections between both universities and communities to share best practice and increase outreach and widening participation with GTRSB communities would be desirable. Responses below have been organised into these two themes of closer collaboration and information sharing across institutions and engagement with community.

**Institutional collaboration**

*It would be useful to have some contact / meetings with other universities who have signed the Pledge to share emerging and best practice. We have relatively small numbers of GTRSB students (only two proactively engaged with us last year) which means it can be difficult to ensure student views and priorities are considered as we develop this support.*

*It would be really helpful to have (even termly) meetings with other universities who have signed the Pledge.*

*We would value training/learning from others about how to foster cross-university work towards the Pledge - possible routes to getting university wide buy in / tips on what works/doesn’t. Maybe also opportunities to help facilitate regional collaboration.*

*As a result of this survey, we would be interested to hear the showcased stories from Kings and other HEIs*

**Community engagement**

*Linking with communities/charities/networks to develop access/outreach activity or invite for guest talks on some of our Education/Health and Wellbeing programmes.*

*It would be helpful to have access to any regional contacts for local community groups in the area that we may not otherwise have any initial way of contacting or connecting with.*

*It would also be helpful to learn a bit more about how to get initial engagement when we have not yet built a relationship with local GTRSB communities – and what kind of outreach activities or events to start with, what would be best received, etc.*

**Question: If you have any other information you would like to share with us - for example links to good practice case studies, blogs, examples of your outreach activities, please provide further information below including (if relevant) web-page links**

**Winchester University**

*Opening the Doors conference website resources -* [*https://www.winchester.ac.uk/collaboration/widening-participation/opening-the-doors-conference/#*](https://www.winchester.ac.uk/collaboration/widening-participation/opening-the-doors-conference/)

**University of Sunderland University**

[*https://search1.sunderland.ac.uk/s/search.html?collection=uos&query=GTRSB*](https://search1.sunderland.ac.uk/s/search.html?collection=uos&query=GTRSB)

[*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1FhZ5KQ\_qY&feature=youtu.be*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1FhZ5KQ_qY&feature=youtu.be)

[*https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/more/news/story/university-backs-Pledge-to-support-gtrsb-students--1480*](https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/more/news/story/university-backs-pledge-to-support-gtrsb-students--1480)

*I also have GRT History Month promo materials I can share with you via email - just let me know if these would be useful.*

**Strathclyde University**

*Further information relating to Q4- Whilst we are now collecting data on students from GTRSB backgrounds, we are currently collecting this under one ‘GTRSB’ umbrella. We recognise that it is not ideal to not be able to differentiate between students who are Gypsy compared to students who are Roma, etc. Therefore, we are working on changing the format of our student registration questionnaire for future academic years.*

***Northumbria University***

*The radio broadcast is available to access here:* [*https://www.skimstone.org.uk/the-open-page*](https://www.skimstone.org.uk/the-open-page)

***Nelson College*** *.*

*We have created a dedicated webpage on our GTRSB Pledge:* [*https://nelsoncollege.ac.uk/gtrsb-Pledge*](https://nelsoncollege.ac.uk/gtrsb-pledge)

**Buckinghamshire New University (BNU)**

*Link to the GTRSB resource page* [Taking the Pledge: Event Resources | Buckinghamshire New University (bucks.ac.uk)](https://www.bucks.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-stand/gtrsb-higher-education-pledge/taking-pledge-event-resources)

***Conclusion and recommendations***

Whilst still in its infancy a lot of positive work and engagement is taking place across the signatory organisations in developing and working towards the Pledge commitments and making a difference for our GTRSB students and staff. Moving forward consideration will be given to how to develop the key recommendations from the survey which are to:

* *Raise the profile and use of the network for sharing information, resources etc.*
* *Regular networking events between institutions.*

1. See further: House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry into “Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities” (2019) London: HMSO; available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/360/full-report.html> (Accessed 25 March 2022) and The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2016) Is Britain Fairer? Spotlight on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma Manchester: EHRC available at:

   <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/is-england-fairer-2016-most-disadvantaged-groups-migrants-refugees-asylum-seekers.pdf> (accessed 15 April 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Department of Education (2022) GCSE Results Attainment 8 [www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/11-to-16-years-old/gcse](http://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/11-to-16-years-old/gcse) (Accessed 13 May,2022) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Gypsy, Roma and Travellers in higher education London/Bristol: OfS Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/gypsy-roma-and-traveller-communities/> (Accessed 7 April 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See the report of the event (including a background briefing on the state of knowledge on GTRSB experiences in Greenfields, M. (2019) Report of a Roundtable Meeting on Access to Higher Education for members of Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma (GTR) communities. High Wycombe: BNU at: <https://bucks.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/17932/> (Accessed 25 March 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)