



# REPORT RACISM GRT REVIEW

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OCTOBER 2020/2021

## **Report Racism GRT**

Is a hate incident reporting site and support service that is run by and for Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma (GRT) communities in the UK by GATE Herts. For this report we use the initials GRT when referring to Gypsy, Roma & Traveller people

Report Racism GRT is staffed by two caseworkers, one is based in GATE Herts in Hertfordshire and the other is based in Brighton with Friends, Families & Travellers (FFT)

We support Gypsy, Roma or Traveller people who have been victims of Racism, including Verbal Abuse, Physical Abuse, Online Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Social or any abuse that has affected them physically or emotionally.

We collaborate with the police and other agencies to challenge racism directed towards the GRT community.

## **What is a Hate Crime?**

A hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived religion, prejudice or perceived race, prejudice based on a person's religion or perceived religion, prejudice based on a person's sexual orientation, prejudice based on a person's disability, or perceived disability, or prejudice against someone who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.

## **What are hate incidents?**

A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender.

## **Impact of Hate**

Hate crimes/incidents impact not only the individual targeted by the crime, but the victim's community as well, inciting fear, anger, and suspicion. For victims of a hate crime, understanding that there are resources specific to their identity group can be a major source of support.

## **Introduction**

The term Anti Gypsy, Roma Travellerism was proposed by GATE Herts and has been adopted as a working definition by the Green Party

Anti-Gypsy Roma Traveller prejudice contributes to perpetuating the social exclusion of Roma and Travellers and becomes a major obstacle to the enjoyment of their human rights.

Furthermore, data collected reveals that hate crime is a severe threat to the physical and psychological safety and wellbeing of its victims (Noelle, 2003). In fact, what distinguishes 'hate crime' from other types of crimes is that all 'hate crimes' hurt more than general crimes. (Iganski, 2008).

GRT victims of hate crime not only have the direct experience of the crime but often also meet double or secondary victimisation through biases and the blame of people and institutions they encounter afterward (Herek & Berrill, 1992). The fear of being treated unfairly and negatively by those who are supposed to help affects the willingness of the victims to report and seek help for recovery (Iganski, 2008).

The hateful rhetoric, incidents, and crimes that Gypsies and Travellers experience every day are harmful in multiple ways: they suffer effects that are physical, psychological, and impact on the wider community. GRT victims of hate crime may suffer more mental ill-health and face greater impacts on their wellbeing from hate crime victimisation compared to other types of crime victimisation (Iganski, 2008; 2001; Perry, 2003; D'Augelli & Grossmann, 2001; Herek, Gillis, Cogan, & Glunt, 1997).

As shown by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc., common signs and symptoms of trauma reactions and excessive stress include physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural factors (Mitchell & Everly, 1998). The effects of historical discrimination and persecution do not end with the act itself but continue to negatively affect the people persecuted as 'gypsies' in their economic, social and psychological lives. They are also disproportionately represented within the criminal justice system. There are higher mortality rates and incidences of suicide within GRT communities than are found amongst the wider British population.

Hate crime directed toward the GRT is a multifaceted phenomenon; to tackle it requires a diversified set of instruments that includes criminal justice, equality measures and awareness-raising. Ultimately, this entails foremost the responsibility of duty-bearers to respect, protect and fulfil human rights commitments.

### **The Hate Crime Officer at GATE Herts writes...**

The Covid pandemic has been particularly challenging for the Gypsy, Roma & Travelling Communities. The communities receive abuse for traveling during the pandemic yet continues to be moved on by local authorities and the police.

Reports of hate crime or hate incidents are still lower from the communities than we would like due to distrust of the police, belief that nothing will be done about it, issues with literacy, and an acceptance that discrimination and hate are normal and part of everyday life. e.g., being followed around supermarkets by security guards; refusal of service in bars and restaurants; name-calling, etc.

However, due to our work with the communities and the police, in particular hate crime leads within police forces, we have seen an increase in positive outcomes. These may be simply the proper recording of the incident as a hate incident rather than a pushback or no response at all

There are still police forces around the country who are unaware of the police reporting website True Vision. Furthermore, police forces will attach different crime/incidents numbers to the cases submitted to them through the True Vision reporting website than the reference numbers allocated by True Vision. As there is no continuity between the police recording crime/incident numbers and True Vision's reference number it can be difficult for our Hate Crime case worker to track reports.

We find that the chasing up of reports we have made to the police, which have not been responded to by them, is time consuming.

We look to look at innovative ways to challenge negative stereotypes. To change hearts and minds when a case does not reach court, we find that increasingly police are willing to try Restorative Justice or Community Resolution orders with perpetrators of hate incidents. This gives us opportunity to explain the effects their actions have on Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people and how these impact on their mental health especially on children growing up in such a hostile environment.

A successful outcome of these sessions would mean that the offender/harmer will have a better understanding of the damage caused and agree to cease posting hate and challenge other people on their hateful posts

While most hate speech/crime/incidents are online, we do see a rise in incidents of physical violence and verbal abuse after Gypsies, Roma, or Travellers are featured in the media or after Gypsy & Traveller events like Appleby Horse Fair.

People contact us through the Report Racism GRT website, social media platforms, by phone, or by email. We are seeing a rise in victims being signposted to us from local authorities, the police, other ethnic minority groups, and from within the GRT and wider communities.

In cases of discrimination, cases may be referred on request to solicitors to assess the case and advise if a civil action can be taken.

## **Casework**

Examples of incidents include:

1) In an article about Travellers, on a Facebook page, a woman posted “the traveller community are a bloody nuisance, setting up where they like, not contributing to anything, no rules & regulations.....should be exterminated.”

Because of Covid restrictions an online Restorative Justice meeting was suggested by the police force and agreed to by Report Racism GRT. The Restorative Justice meeting was attended by a police officer, the offender, and our Hate Crime caseworkers.

2) A Romany Gypsy man reported that he was experiencing threatening racist verbal abuse from a neighbour. We logged this on the Report Racism GRT website, and we reported the incidents to the Police. The Police were already in direct contact with the person and continued to keep open dialog with the assigned caseworker; the caseworker kept constant communications with the victim, linked the victim-to-victim support and gave further information about mental health services locally. The result ultimately laid with the local authority under housing, as there was not sufficient evidence available and both neighbours were reporting counter allegations. Police have stepped back from the case and have handed over to the local authority

3) A Romany Gypsy woman contacted us as she had been subject to police arrest; her husband also was arrested. They were both arrested due to an altercation with the Police. This was reported to the Report Racism GRT website. The caseworker spoke to the victims weekly and kept regular dialog with the Police about the incident. The victims felt they were being targeted by neighbours and the Police. The victim requested ‘right of access’ information which showed several Police visits over the past year. The visits from the Police were triggered by neighbour complaints and all complaints were with no further lines of enquiry. As an outcome, the victims accepted a house move with the local authority and wished to not pursue any complaints against the Police. The victims initial arrest ended with No Further Action (NFA).

## **Report Racism GRT: Aims and Outcomes**

To promote awareness of hate and improve outcomes for hate crimes/incidents reported against Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities

- Increased reporting of hate from both members of the GRT communities and the wider community.
- To increase confidence in the Gypsy, Roma & Traveller communities that they will be heard and hate incidents and hate crimes will be dealt with properly by police
- 4 Restorative Justice/ Community Resolution orders
- In an effort to change hearts and minds, we have approached police forces around the country to facilitate Community Resolution orders and Restorative Justice meetings. Some forces have responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to resolve the hate incident/hate crime through interaction between the offender/harmer and the victim. This provides the victim with the time and space to explain the impact and effect of the hate and it gives the offender the opportunity to reflect on what they have done, apologise and make up for the harm their offending has caused.

To increase reports of hate from members of the GRT communities and see a significant rise in police recorded hate crime

- Building and improving relationships with more police forces throughout the country, linking in with more Police Diverse Community Teams and becoming increasingly recognised as the Hate Reporting Site for Gypsies and Travellers

To improve relations between GRT communities and police, to give the GRT communities a greater level of trust and confidence in the organisation so that best results are achieved

- Our reputation as an authority on discrimination and racism faced by the GRT communities has grown over the years, an example of which was Baroness Whitaker's speech in November 21 in the House of Lords, who while debating the proposed Police Crime Sentencing and Courts bill commended GATE Herts contribution to combating Hate and discrimination through their Report Racism GRT project.

### **Report Racism GRT: Outputs**

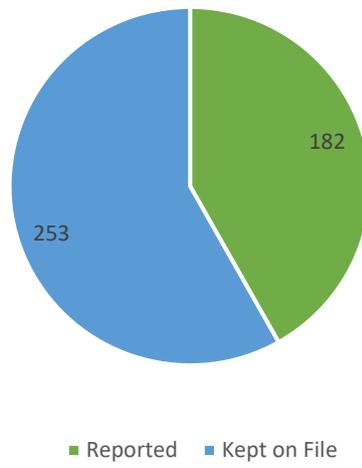
- Attended fifteen online meetings with Police forces nationwide and Her Majesty's Prison Service
- Attended three seminars/meetings on the new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill
- Attended five meetings with the Crown Prosecution Service nationally and regionally
- Filed 182 reports directly to the Police
- Participated in 2 Traveller events 'Drive to Survive' and Appleby
- Hosted two webinars on the effects of hate crime on Gypsies, Roma & Travellers
- Directed four cases of discrimination to solicitors
- Submitted a complaint to Ofcom
- Attended Five Hate crime champion/third party reporters online training
- Attended two meetings with the Law Commission to discuss their proposals and feed into the consultation and review of hate crime laws

- Delivered Cultural awareness training to Northumbria police during GRT History month
- Published a report with Buckinghamshire New University on the psychological effects of hate crime on Gypsies, Roma & Travellers “Hate – As regular as rain”
- Campaigned with CATCH in ‘Together Against Hate’ during Hate Crime Awareness Week
- Submitted 4 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests
- Submitted ten complaints regarding actions and attitudes of its councillors to local authorities
- Attended 2 South East CPS Scrutiny Panel meetings to review cases
- Contributed to the Home Office research on the secondary impacts of hate crime on GRT communities to increase the understanding of the wider impacts of hate crimes
- Collaborated with media on articles and reports such as Herts live, Welwyn Hatfield times, Sky, RT, Travellers Times, Liberty, Peoples Health Trust.
- Joint statement with other GRT organisations to the home office opposing section four of the proposed Police Crime Sentencing and Courts bill.
- Gave evidence to scrutiny panels on the impact of Hate for Gypsies and Travellers
- Sat on Hate Crime partnership boards
- Sat on Equally Ours hate crime strategy board

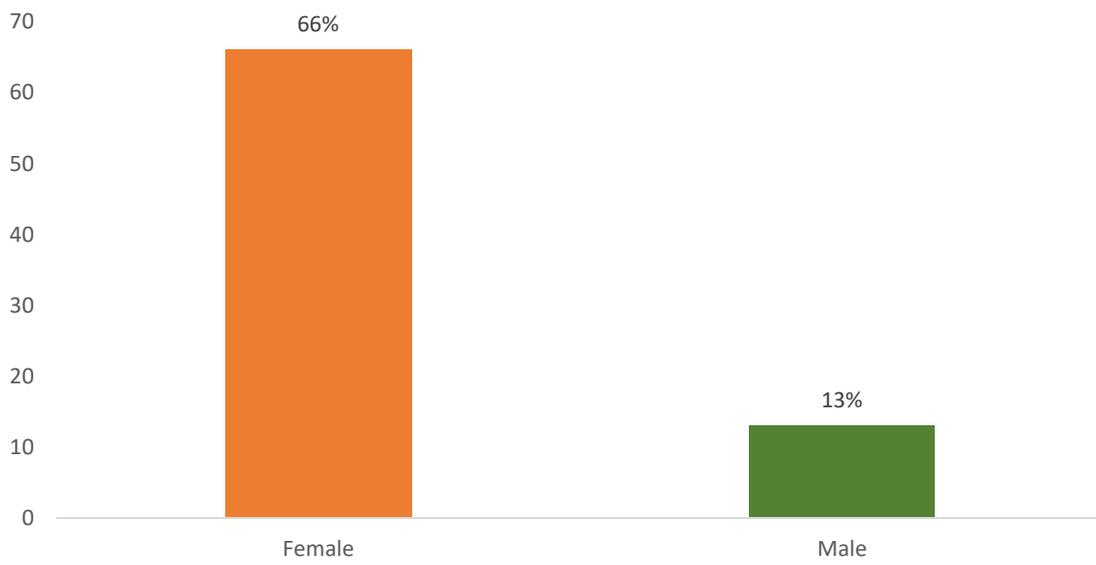
## **Report Racism GRT Data Oct 2020 - Oct 2021**

**435 cases were reported to Report Racism GRT between Oct 2020 and Oct 2021**

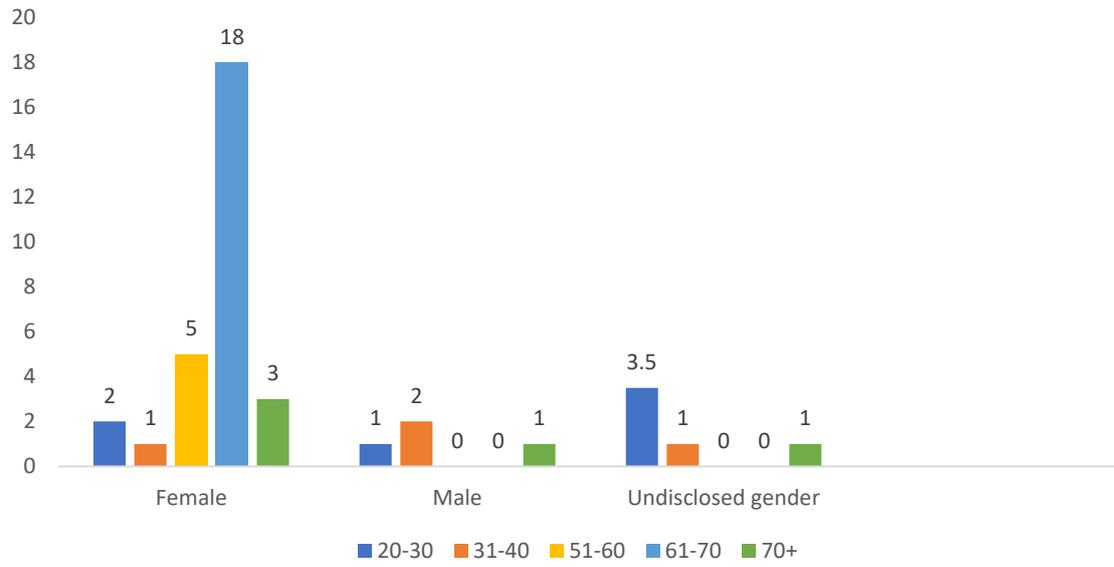
### Number of cases reported to the Police



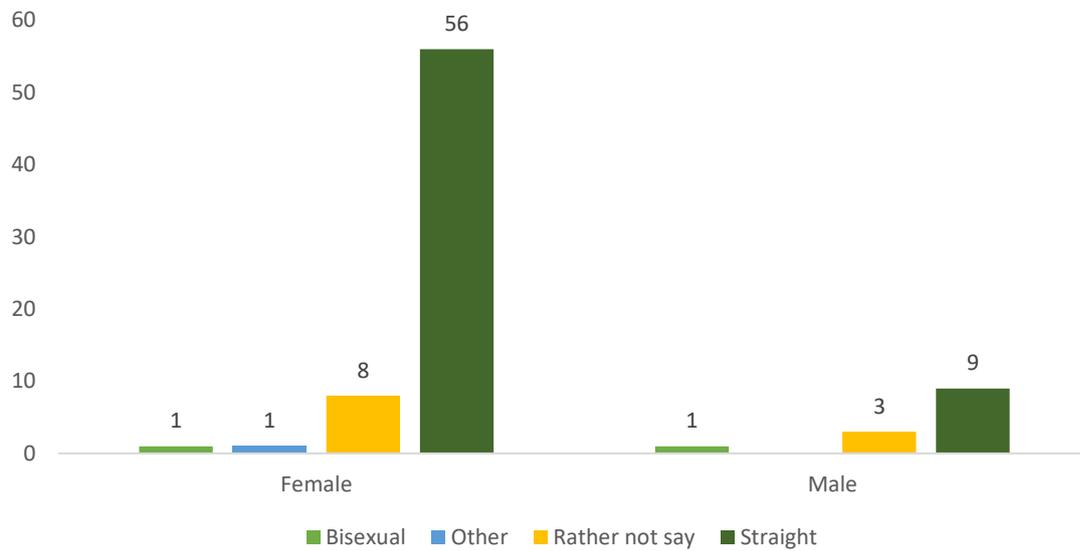
### Which gender are you?



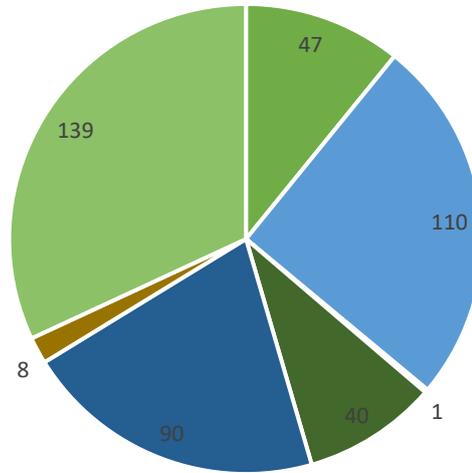
### Which age bracket do you fall into?



### What is your sexuality

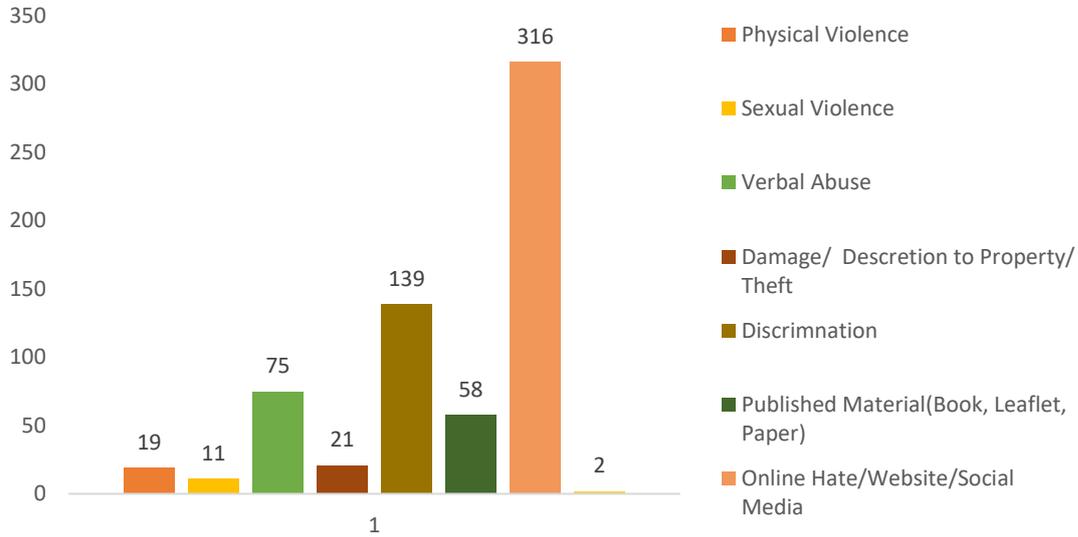


### What is your ethnicity?

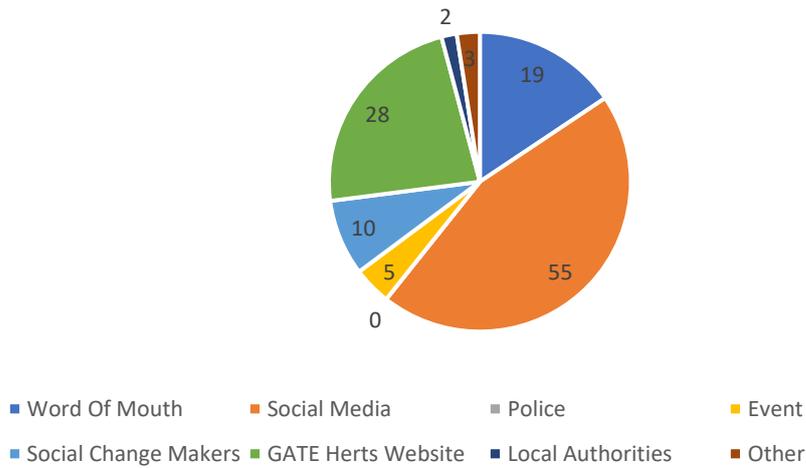


■ GRT  
 ■ Irish Traveller  
 ■ Mixed Heritage  
 ■ No Answer  
 ■ Non GRT  
 ■ Roma  
 ■ Romany

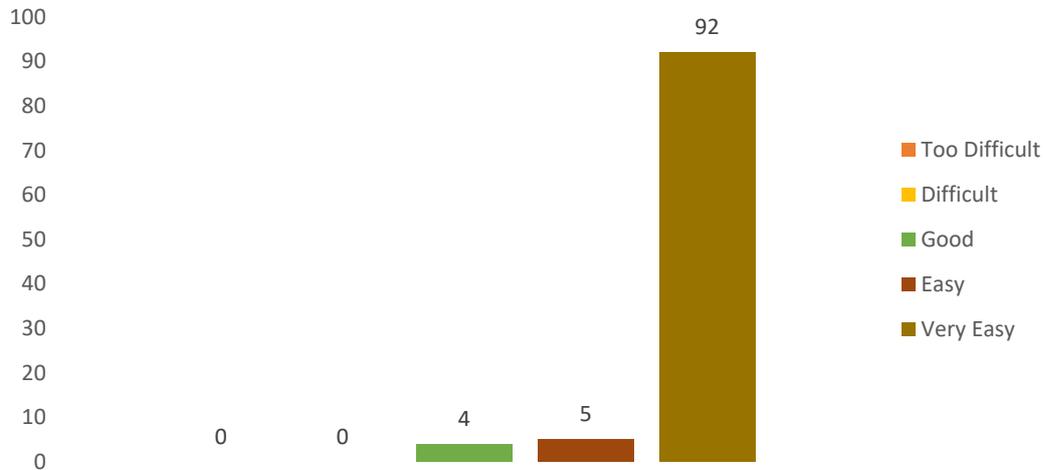
### What type of incident are you reporting?



### How did you hear of Report Racism GRT



### What was your experience of using the Reporting form



### Recommendations

- The Police to allocate more resources to investigate race hate reports, such as hate on YouTube and TikTok.
- Many studies show that members of the GRT communities feel unsupported by mainstream services and had limited knowledge of where and how to seek support. This can be worsened by digital poverty and low literacy. We recommend that more must be done to improve the literacy levels and digital access of these communities.

- The Police to improve their practice development in relation to Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities and to ensure consistency in how reports are dealt with across jurisdictions.
- The Government to increase funding to Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller civil society for tackling race hate.
- Social media companies should co-operate more closely with the Police on race-hate issues.
- Online news organisations should co-operate more closely with the Police on race-hate hosted on their platforms.
- The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to undertake more scrutiny panels and supply further guidance on online hate
- Social media companies to review their user safety algorithms and to ensure they capture hate towards Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities
- Gypsies and Travellers are particularly subject to notices excluding them from premises. In the past, these notices may have been treated as a matter for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). Today, subject to individual circumstances, the owners of premises displaying such notices could be committing offenses or licensing breaches. Use of such notices should, therefore, be thoroughly investigated and action considered by the police or licensing authority, in addition to any referral to the EHRC.
- When crimes are committed based on anti-GRT bias, epithets often reveal the motive for the attack. Epithets are used to stereotype GRT, and most are intended to be an attack on their background. Typical anti-GRT epithets are, 'thieves,' 'criminal,' 'baby snatcher' 'scrotes,' 'scum,' 'dirty,' 'filthy' and 'savages. At times, a perpetrator may use the term "Gypo" "Pikey" "Tink" which are offensive pronunciation of their ethnicity. Hate crime perpetrators sometimes use this to harass the victim based upon perceived race/ethnicity, religion, or national origin. We recommend that such terms are recognised as derogatory and that algorithms on social media platforms be adjusted to reflect this.
- GRT victims may be hesitant to disclose their ethnicity, especially if the victim has experienced violence or vandalism, possibly because of this heritage. As when working with any crime victim, it is important to communicate clearly why they are being asked questions about their background. It should be explained thoroughly that questions about the victim's background are solely for the purpose of a criminal investigation and will help decide whether a hate crime occurred. GRT victims and witnesses will be more likely to answer questions if they are assured that this information is only being gathered to decide if it was a hate crime and prevent it from occurring in the future
- Gypsies and Travellers may be either visible or non-visible ethnic minorities, by this we mean Gypsies and Travellers are not always either site resident or permanently travelling. The lack of appropriate site provision has led to many people who would

otherwise pursue a travelling lifestyle to move into settled housing. Nevertheless, the community keep their cultural values, and their ethnic status as such does not alter. This may continue for several generations after taking up settled housing and it may be the intention of many to return to a travelling lifestyle. Therefore, there must be a greater understanding that residential status does not diminish the potential of a Gypsy or Traveller becoming a victim of hate crime based on ethnicity

- Cultural and religious practices of Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities are unique to the individual, as with any ethnicity. Everyone might engage in practices that are different from another individual. Considering these differences, it is important to avoid making generalisations and to engage each person on an individual basis to understand their practice, while remaining sensitive and respectful.
- GRT communities may face language barriers or be hesitant to interact with authorities because of fear, mistrust, or earlier experiences, whether in the UK or their countries of origin. Some people in GRT communities come from places where, for several reasons, an individual might not contact the authorities.

Building trust with GRT people is important to gain an understanding of the diverse cultures and lifestyles of the people encompassed under this umbrella term.

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