

Healthwatch Oxfordshire - Report on Gypsy and Traveller Community  
Feedback from the Windrush PPG

The Committee noted that only 23% of families took part in the survey and that there were considerable difficulties in making contact. The Key Findings in the Executive Summary are remarkably similar to the views of the General Public in terms of Patient Experience of the NHS. Issues raised such as booking an appointment, seeing their own GP, referrals to a specialist, difficulty in getting to hospitals are not unique to this group. The same applies to the lack of regular and reliable public transport which is exactly the same for people living in villages.

With regard to the second recommendation - that there be a key worker based at a children's centre "close to" each site - is there one "close to" each site? And if funding for Children's Centres is already an issue, this may not be a starter.

Mental Health Issues are clearly a problem which is exacerbated by the fact that they do not openly discuss problems with each other.

There are major problems in many areas of the country in trying to access N.H.S. dentistry so we can't see how they could have regular treatment.

In the 2011 census only 0.1% of the population in England and Wales were part of this community and that the general population were living up to 50% longer than Gypsies and Travellers. Other prevalent health issues in these communities, such as high mortality rates, low child immunisation levels, mental health issues, substance misuse issues and diabetes indicate that additional education is required. Perhaps it would be useful to combine the role of the Outreach Worker and Health Advocate to cover these.

The travellers' concerns are, by and large, not much different from the rest of us but are expressed more clearly. They may "present as more forceful, don't want to be fobbed off, and want to be taken seriously".

The fact that they tend to expect appointments on the same day as they ring is not realistic. Although the thought of a GP phone back service sounds good, would this be expensive and would it be available to other sections of the community? Has this been costed, and if so, where would the funding come from?

The Gypsy/Travelling Communities expect to receive an almost 'instant' service, which clearly is just not possible with the increased population of this country. GPs acknowledged that travellers tend to consult them more than other patients and are high users of the services although they are less likely to take up regular health checks and plan their own healthcare.

We are concerned that if they make an accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller fraternity, then they will need to make accommodations for a wide variety of other groups.

Those in the Gypsy/Traveller community have a different lifestyle. The government of the day or any other day, cannot be responsible for any and every aspect of people's lives.

It was good to see that the Windrush Medical Centre came out so well.