

National Traveller Accommodation Conference

2016 REPORT



Traveller Accommodation Conference
Tuesday 12th April 2016
De Vere Hall, UCC, Cork



Introduction



The National Traveller Accommodation Conference was held in University College Cork on 12th April 2016 as a response to the Traveller accommodation crisis experienced by Travellers across the Cork and Kerry region, as well as by Travellers on a national level.

The conference took place in the aftermath of the fatal Carrickmines fire at a halting site in 2015, which led to the tragic deaths of 10 people and in the context of ongoing state failure to provide adequate and safe accommodation for the Traveller community nationally, despite massive advocacy work by Travellers and Traveller organisations.

The Carrickmines tragedy led to a national outpouring of grief and a renewed focus on Traveller accommodation issues, but it also highlighted the ongoing issues of extreme discrimination and racism faced by Travellers across the country: public protests around the location of emergency accommodation for the Carrickmines survivors; evictions making Traveller families homeless in Dundalk a number of weeks later and a worrying lack of urgency addressing fire safety risks which exist in almost 80% of Traveller accommodation nationally.

The longstanding failure of the Irish state to recognise Traveller ethnicity formed a backdrop to the accommodation crisis. On the 1st March 2017, in a historic move which has gives a framework for strengthening future Traveller accommodation policy and delivery, the government formally recognised Traveller ethnicity. Traveller organisations have engaged for many years in partnership structures that have failed to deliver safe culturally appropriate accommodation and are currently awaiting the

National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy in 2017 which will lay out future state policy on Traveller accommodation.

The National Traveller Accommodation conference drew on speakers from academia, voluntary housing bodies as well as community leaders and activists from the Traveller community. We aimed to highlight and discuss the accommodation needs of Travellers around following key themes: history and ethnicity, halting sites and social housing; the private rented sector; and homelessness and the housing needs assessment process. We also sought to explore solutions to the current problems being experienced by Travellers and to look at models of good practice in both Ireland and the UK by consulting with those in attendance.

This report sets out a summary of these presentations and key points from the discussions.

The conference also marked the launch of the Cork and Kerry Regional Traveller Accommodation Working Group's manifesto which calls for 10 priority areas of actions for the Irish government to address the current crisis in Traveller accommodation (see Appendix 3)

The National Traveller Accommodation Conference was organised by the Cork and Kerry Regional Traveller Accommodation Working Group, which is a collaboration between 5 Traveller led community development organisations – Cork Traveller Women's Network, Traveller Visibility Group, Cork, West Cork Travellers, Travellers of North Cork and Kerry Travellers Health and Community Development Project, supported by the Traveller Health Unit, HSE South.

no people
know more
than
Travellers
about
what it
is like



Brigid Quilligan

Summary of Presentations

Conference Launch

Leas Ard Mhéara Chorcaí, Cllr Mick Nugent.

The conference was formally launched by *Leas Ard Mhéara Chorcaí, Cllr Mick Nugent*. Speaking as Chair of the Cork city Local Traveller Consultative Committee and a City Councillor, the Leas Ard Mhéara discussed the opportunities and tensions that exist around progressing Traveller accommodation locally. The recent development of the new St Anthony's Park Traveller group housing scheme at Hollyhill in Cork was welcomed as a positive development. Cllr Nugent hopes that there will be more responses like this to Traveller accommodation needs and is committed to progressing this in his role as councillor on both local and national level.

Opening Address

Prof. Alastair Christie, Head of the School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork

Prof Christie welcomed the conference as part of building partnerships between Traveller projects and the university. He outlined the role that the University College Cork could have in developing responses to the Traveller accommodation crisis, including taking on research and supporting education with the wider public around the matter.

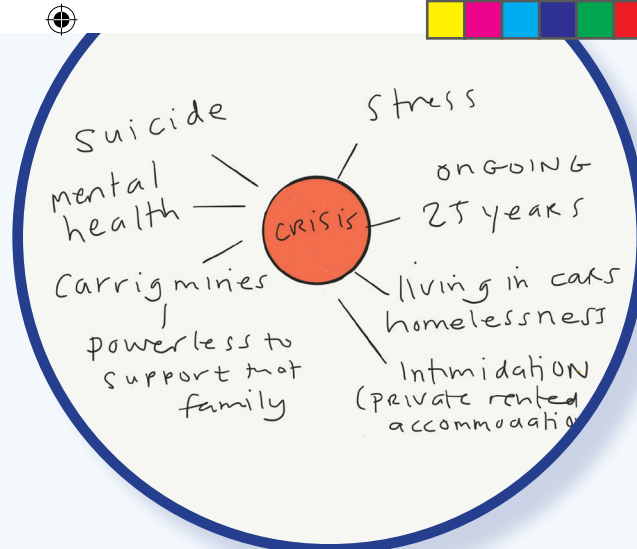
Conference Presentations

Launch of the Cork and Kerry Regional Traveller Accommodation Working Group's Manifesto

Brigid Quilligan, Coordinator Kerry Travellers Health & Community Development Project & Former Director of Irish Traveller Movement:

Nobody knows more than Travellers as to what their accommodation needs are and so engagement with the community is paramount. Travellers have been experiencing an accommodation crisis for the past 25 years. This has led the community to continue to fare poorly on all the socio-economic measures used to determine health. Many families are living in overcrowded, difficult and dangerous living conditions; families are homeless, sleeping in cars

"It is despicable the conditions our people are living in
— Bridget Carey



and are intimidated and turned away when they try to access private rented accommodation. The accommodation crisis is severely affecting people's mental health. The high instances of suicide within the community have to be looked at in relation to Travellers struggles with adequate accommodation.

The Carrickmines Tragedy showed the impact of this long term government neglect of Traveller accommodation. In the aftermath of this tragedy, Traveller projects were powerless to support the survivors, who were sent to live in a rat infested carpark. Accommodation work can feel like we are banging our heads against a wall. Traveller projects are trying to explore other ways to progress accommodation rights because the current structures are not working.

Brigid Quilligan went on to formally launch the Cork and Kerry Regional Traveller Accommodation Working Group's manifesto, which outlines 10 priority actions for the Irish government to address the crisis in Traveller accommodation (see Appendix 3 for the full Manifesto).

Priority actions to address the Traveller Accommodation Crisis

1. The Irish State to recognise Traveller Ethnicity
2. Create a new independent National Traveller Accommodation Agency
3. Increase the Traveller Accommodation Budget
4. Ensure Travellers and Traveller organisations are involved in decision making around Traveller accommodation
5. National Monitoring of local authority Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs)
6. A commitment to Culturally appropriate Accommodation Options for all Traveller Families
7. Implement recommendations of the NTACC Review of the Traveller Accommodation Act.
8. Support Traveller NOMADISM: Repeal the Criminal Trespass Act 2002 & create a network of transient halting sites
9. Direct local authorities to undertake immediate fire and safety checks of Traveller accommodation
10. Plan effectively around the needs of Travellers experiencing Homelessness



Key Themes

Key Theme 1: History, Legislative Context of Traveller Accommodation in Ireland & Traveller Ethnicity

Traveller History, Ethnicity & Accommodation

David Joyce, Barrister in Law & Irish Human Rights and Equality Commissioner

Irish Government policy from the 1963 Commission on Itinerancy report onwards, has set the context for the assimilation of Travellers and this is the approach which continues to the present day. An assimilationist state has impacted on generations of Travellers, whose cultural context and ethnicity are still not recognised. Travellers continue to live in poor accommodation in unwanted areas of town.

A new rights based approach with ethnic recognition is needed. Travellers are entitled to live in well-designed spaces, with extended family, to be able to make a living, to have their horses close by and to feel safe in their homes. Legal work is also a key to progressing Traveller rights and challenge state failure to recognise Travellers and deliver suitable accommodation.

Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR)

Dessie Donnelly, Participation & Practice of Rights

Located in Belfast, PPR uses a Human Rights Based Approach to support marginalised people to make real social and economic change in their communities. The presentation outlined PPRs Right to Housing campaign with residents of very poor quality and neglected housing developments. PPR supports people to assert their rights and hold the government to account by: monitoring the state through the development of human rights indicators and benchmarks; bypassing ineffective processes which have failed communities in the past and creating new ways to engage with the state and make complaints; using innovative campaigning and lobbying tactics to raise awareness and apply pressure. The presentation also outlined the need to develop concrete proposals which are capable of creating positive change for people in the short term, but which also begin to address deeper issues around inequality and exclusion. It concluded that Travellers need to actively participate in the development of law

and policy, the allocation of budgets, implementation of programmes and monitoring or else Traveller's rights will continue to be violated by the state.

Key theme 2: Traveller Halting sites & Group Housing

Cena: Traveller led Culturally Appropriate Homes

Bridgie Casey, Project Coordinator, Cena: Culturally Appropriate Homes

Cena, 'Culturally Appropriate Homes Ltd' is a not for profit Traveller Led Voluntary Accommodation Association. It was set up in 2010, as an alternative to the lack of delivery and poor management of Traveller accommodation, which was undermined planning barriers, poor involvement of Travellers in the design and development of accommodation and racism.

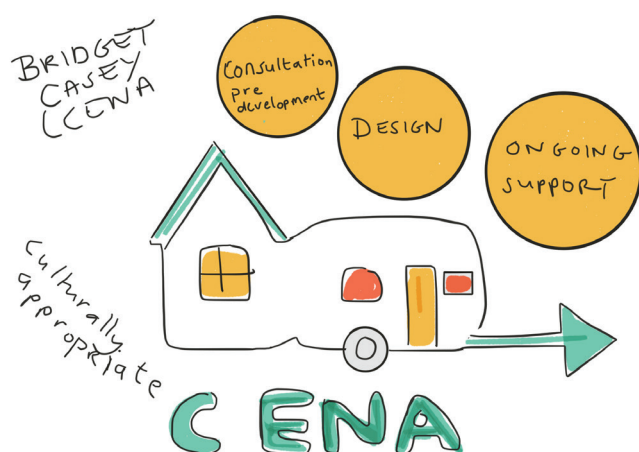
CENA's mission is to lead the way in innovation and best practice in the design, delivery and management of culturally appropriate accommodation for Travellers and build strategic relationships with other social housing providers to achieve its vision.

CENA's aims are

- To develop a Traveller led model for the delivery and management of Traveller Accommodation that will support Travellers to take a lead and participate in all levels of Cena including creating opportunities for the employment of Travellers.
- To design and deliver with Travellers a range of culturally appropriate accommodation (standard housing, group housing, halting sites, provision for Nomadism) that meets their needs.
- To develop management systems, including self management, for Traveller accommodation that has the flexibility and capacity to meet the needs of Travellers and ensure sustainability of Traveller accommodation.
- To develop a range of key relationships with social housing providers, Traveller organizations and other relevant stakeholders to support the implementation of Traveller accommodation across a range of options.

Cena's work is informed by a community development approach, which facilitates the active participation and inclusion of Travellers in the pre-development, design and ongoing management of Traveller accommodation.

CENA is currently delivering two pilot Traveller accommodation projects: a group housing scheme in Offaly and halting site in Galway



Key theme 3: Social Housing & Private Rented Accommodation

Phases of Social Housing Provision in Ireland.

Professor Cathal O'Connell, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork

The presentation gave an overview of recent developments in social housing in the Irish housing system. A number of phases are evident in how the state has provided social housing supports: Phase one pre-1990 was the longest established phase which set the benchmark of high levels of construction of local authority homes, available to tenants with security of tenure and at affordable rents. Phase Two from 1990 to 2003 saw diversification as local authority housing was supplemented by housing association provision. Phase two also saw subsidised private renting emerging as a stepping stone to local authority or housing association accommodation. Phase Three from 2003 to the present has been marked by displacement and a shift from direct provision by local authorities and voluntary housing associations. In this phase the private market is identified as

primary source of supply via leasing type schemes and new financiers "off balance sheet" are encouraged to fund social provision as an investment opportunity. It was argued that the growing reliance on the private rented sector in phase three is inferior to provision by social landlords which characterised phases one and two.

Local Traveller accommodation case studies

Breda O'Donoghue, Traveller Visibility Group & Anne Burke, Southern Traveller Health Network:

This presentation outlined a number of case studies of Traveller families in Cork city who are experiencing severe accommodation difficulties.

Travellers experiencing homelessness in Cork city are often hidden. These are families who live in caravans behind their parents house, in overcrowded houses sleeping on the floor or on couches or on unofficial sites around the city in camper vans without any facilities. These families do not have secure accommodation and live in fear of eviction. Families without facilities must use the local swimming pools for showers and the children use public libraries to do their home work in wintertime. There are families in Cork city on unofficial sites using candles for light and who worry daily about the danger of fire from this. Homeless families can find it very difficult to get social welfare payments because they don't have a permanent address, trapping them into further poverty. The city council has made no provision for these Traveller families in their previous or current accommodation plans

These families have been on council housing waiting lists for a number of years and the only system being offered to them to secure a home is the online choice based letting scheme, which allows families to bid on houses. This is not suitable for families who are not computer literate and in many cases do not have access to electricity, never mind computers. For these families, online choice based letting is just another barrier. In addition, Choice Based Letting does not make any provision for meeting the needs of Traveller families who require Traveller specific accommodation and denies their identity as Travellers.

Other families live in private rented houses, under the pretence that they are not Travellers, living in fear that once their identity is revealed they will be

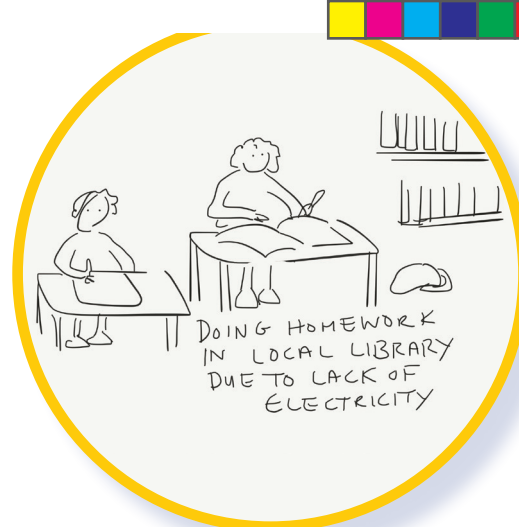
evicted. They also suffer from isolation and lack of support. from their families because they can't allow their families to visit in case the landlord discovers they are Travellers.

Key theme 4: Travellers and Homelessness

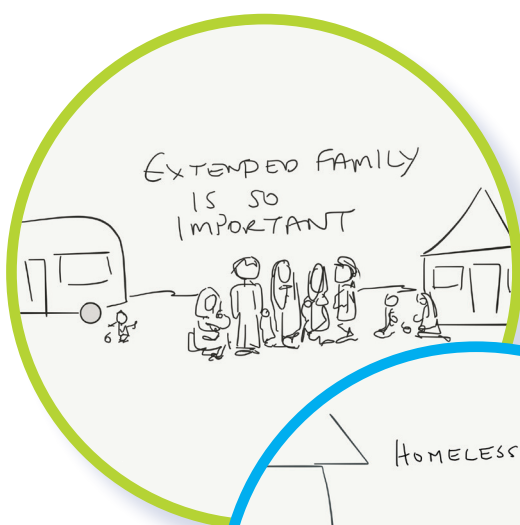
Travelling Through Homelessness: A study of Traveller Homelessness in County Offaly

by Niamh Murphy, Research Consultant

This presentation was based on research into Traveller homelessness in County Offaly, carried out by Niamh Murphy under contract for the Offaly Traveller Movement. The issue of Traveller homelessness is of growing concern in Offaly, as 19.1 per cent of people who presented themselves as homeless to the local authority in 2015 were members of the Traveller Community.



Since Travellers make up 1.3 per cent of the population of the county, it is alarming that they account for such a high proportion of those presenting as homeless. This research involved undertaking a qualitative study of 14 participants who are members of the Traveller community and are currently experiencing, or have recently experienced, an episode of homelessness. Using a life history approach, the research explored the research participants' pathways into, through and out of homelessness. The needs and preferences of those interviewed varied greatly and it is important that any approach to the provision of Traveller accommodation recognises that Travellers are not a homogenous group. However, the research has shown that for those interviewed, the provision of affordable, good quality and – for some – culturally appropriate accommodation is key to a sustainable exit from homelessness.



SHIFT FROM
SOCIAL HOUSING
TO
PRIVATE RENTAL
SECTOR



COMPETITION

↓
SEVERE SHORTAGE OF AFFORDABLE
HOUSING



Key issues raised in World Café Discussions & Plenary session

"World café" style workshops were held to facilitate conference participants to discuss of each key theme: **Traveller Halting sites & Group Housing; Social Housing & Private Rented Accommodation; Travellers and homelessness.**

World Café methodology is a simple, effective and flexible format used to facilitate large group dialogue (see Appendix 4). Conference participants were split into discussion groups and discussed the following questions were considered:

What are possible ways to better support the Traveller community seeking accommodation in this regard?

General Feedback

An overarching theme from all workshops was the call for major reform on how Traveller accommodation is planned and delivered in Ireland.

Traveller specific accommodation as well as redevelopment and upgrading of inadequate and poor quality existing accommodation.

Lack of political will and prioritising Travellers as a community has dogged the development of Traveller accommodation in Ireland. A **national robust monitoring system** needs to be in place to ensure **that targets are developed and met** in order to address the crisis in Traveller accommodation and homelessness. **Engagement of Travellers is essential in planning Traveller accommodation.**

Racism and discrimination were another major theme, highlighted as severely impacting on Travellers being able to access good quality, affordable, culturally appropriate accommodation and prevent homelessness. **Ethnic recognition and equality** are critical in progressing Traveller accommodation.

All public services have an obligation to promote equality and deliver a culturally appropriate efficient service. Travellers in need of accommodation frequently must dealing with officials who do not understand their needs or respect Traveller culture. **Training for local authority staff around equality and Traveller culture** is key to understanding the needs of the community and **delivering a culturally appropriate service.**

Development of this needs to be driven and monitored nationally.

There was a call for the **ongoing development of a Traveller led rights-based campaign** to highlight and ensure a national focus on Traveller accommodation and ensure change. The campaign can **draw on existing rights based work and build links with other groups working on the housing and homelessness crisis.** Current structures are not effective in delivering accommodation for Travellers. Traveller organisations engage huge work in supporting families in crisis due to lack of or inadequate accommodation as well as working strategically in partnership structures but despite this there have been few results. It was pointed out that a minority ethnic group, there needs to be **specific focus, with strategies and budgets developed in partnership with Travellers on Traveller accommodation to meet needs.**

Traveller Halting sites & Group Housing

There is a lack of supply of Traveller specific accommodation and the majority of sites are in very poor quality, overcrowded and completely inadequate. **Existing Traveller specific schemes must be made safe and brought up to a good standard through planned regeneration and new developments planned to respond to need.** Many Travellers feel they have no choice but to move into standard housing due lack of provision of Traveller specific accommodation and terrible conditions on halting sites.

Traveller led development of accommodation including through **Cena voluntary housing association** offer a new way forward. **Existing land zoning and planning processes are often a barrier to the development of Traveller accommodation and this needs to be addressed**

Development of **facilities to support Traveller cultural practices such as traditional horse keeping and spaces for work** is also a key consideration in planning Traveller accommodation

The **nomadic cultural tradition of Travellers** has

not been supported by the state, despite a legal obligation (contained in the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998) to plan for and provide transient halting sites. The **development of Transient sites** has been ignored nationally and the Criminal Trespass Act (2002) which criminalises Travellers practicing nomadism and has severely impacted on Traveller culture even further.

Social Housing & Private Rented Accommodation

Discrimination is a massive and reoccurring barrier for Travellers seeking housing.

The accommodation crisis has also been exacerbated by a failure of local authorities to build new social housing and an overreliance on private rented housing.

The private rental sector is failing to meet the accommodation needs of Travellers. Travellers face additional barriers in securing private rented accommodation due to discrimination by landlords. In addition private rented accommodation is not secure and frequently unaffordable for families in receipt of rent allowance.

A key recommendation was the **urgent increase in standard social housing units through a major national building project and ending of the reliance on the private rental sector to provide accommodation.**

Local authorities **must shorted the time for reallocation of empty houses** – much of which is lying boarded up at present.

Social housing must be affordable and based on a family's means. This means spiralling rents must be addressed – through **rent caps and national monitoring of the private rented sector.**

Travellers and homelessness

There is a hidden homelessness crisis severely impacting on the Traveller community. Many Travellers see declaring the family homeless as a last resort, despite not having adequate



accommodation. Many families are living in overcrowded accommodation, camped in hidden caravans beside their parents invisible to services or at risk of eviction on unauthorised sites. Travellers try to come up with solutions themselves.

The Trespass Act is being used to evict vulnerable families on official sites and cause homelessness. These evictions cause problems without creating a solution. Evictions should be accompanied with offerings of assistance.

Many Travellers are in fear of registering with homeless services for fear that doing so will lead to the family being split up in emergency accommodation or that their children will be put into care. Travellers usually wait until they have no other options until they go into shelters. There is a need for culturally appropriate, emergency family units in shelters

Homelessness impacts on the health and well being of families, particularly children. Homeless families also may experience additional financial hardship, creating a circle of stress and poverty.

Traveller families experiencing homelessness need co-ordinated and action oriented support including advocacy work and psychological supports. For protection of families there is a need for more cohesion and connection between social workers and local authorities housing departments. There is a need for cultural awareness training for all services supporting families who are homeless to ensure that these vulnerable families are treated with respect and empathy.

Key actions to address the specific needs of Travellers needs to be part of a national strategy to address homelessness. Traveller organisations will need to work strategically to ensure that these concerns are heard and acted on by government.

Appendix 1: Programme

9:30 – 10:15 Registration

Tea, coffee & refreshments

10:15 – 10:25 Welcome & Launch

- Chaired by Bridget Quilligan, Manager Kerry Travellers Health & Community
- Development project & Former CEO of Irish Traveller Movement
- Launched by Cllr Mick Nugent, Leas Ard Mhéara Chorcaí

10:25 – 10:35 Opening Address

- Prof. Alastair Christie, Head of the School of Applied Social Studies, UCC

10:35 – 11:15 History, Legislative Context of Traveller Accommodation in Ireland & Traveller Ethnicity

- David Joyce, Barrister in Law & Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Member
- Dessie Donnelly, Participation & Practice of Rights, Belfast

11:15 – 11:30 Traveller Halting sites & Group Housing

- Bridget Casey, Project Coordinator, Cena Culturally Appropriate Homes

11:30 – 11:55 World Café input with feedback

11:55 – 12:25 Social Housing & Private Rented Accommodation

- Professor Cathal O'Connell, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC

12:25 – 12:50 World Café input with feedback

12:50 – 13:20 Lunch

13:20 – 13:40 Travellers and homelessness

- Breda O'Donoghue, Traveller Visibility Group & Ann Burke, Southern Traveller Health Network
- Niamh Murphy, Research Consultant

13:40 – 14:05 World Café input and feedback

14:05 – 14:35 Plenary session with key speakers

14:35 – 14:45 Visual Summary of Conference

14:45 – 15:00 End

Appendix 2: Contact details & Acknowledgements

The Cork and Kerry Regional Traveller Accommodation Working Group is:

- Cork Traveller Women's Network
tel: 086.3850136 and 086.777765
email: corktravellerwomen@hotmail.com
- Traveller Visibility Group Ltd
tel: 021.4503786 email: tvgcork@gmail.com
- West Cork Travellers Centre
tel: 023.8835039 email: wctcmail@gmail.com
- Travellers of North Cork (TNC)
tel: 022.71035 email: travellersnorthcork@live.com
- Kerry Travellers Health and Community Development Project
tel: 066.7120054
email: projectmanagerkthcdp@eircom.net
- Southern Traveller Health Network
tel: 086.0484272 and 087.2669024
email: sthnanne@gmail.com / rogan.annmarie@gmail.com

Acknowledgements

The Cork and Kerry Regional Traveller Accommodation Working Group would like to thank the following for their support in organising the conference:

- Traveller Health Unit, HSE South for providing funding and for supporting responses to Traveller accommodation needs in building Travellers health status
- University College Cork, in particular Joe Finnerty and Professor Alastair Christie from the School of Applied Social Studies
- All the speakers & people opening the conference
- All the participants at the seminar
- All the workshop facilitators
- Bridget Quilligan, Kerry Travellers Health & Community Development Project & Former Director of Irish Traveller Movement for Chairing the event
- Ciara Ridge, Traveller Visibility Group for co-ordinating the conference
- Louise Harrington, Cork Traveller Women's Network and Ciara Ridge for writing the conference report
- Lisa Fingleton for graphic support on the day and depicted throughout this support

The conference was attended by 87 people, with 75 staying to participate in the workshops. Participants came from Traveller projects across the country, HSE, University College Cork, Cork City Council, Cluid Housing, Irish Housing Network, Kerry County Council, Irish Human Rights Commission, Exchange House, South Kerry Development Partnership, Respond Housing, and Waterford against Racism, Dublin City Council and People Before Profit. The conference was held as an event as part of Cork City's Lifelong Learning Festival.




Appendix 3: Cork and Kerry Regional Traveller Accommodation Working Group Manifesto

Following the fatal Carrickmines tragedy...

Traveller accommodation has gained more national media attention.

The same concerns exist across Cork and Kerry ...



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE NTACC

The National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC) reported on the progress of local authorities 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAPs). This report drew attention to a number of areas...

- Traveller count (the method and count format) varies, and is difficult to establish comparisons
- Not all Local Authorities had set annual targets and reviewed progress with members of the LTACC
- There is a need for greater monitoring of local authorities, i.e. a National Traveller Accommodation Agency or greater powers to NTACC to oversee the implementation of TAPs

For the full text of the NTACC report, go to: <http://www.environment.ie/en/Publications/Development/nbHousing/Housing/FileDownload.ashx?14966.en.pdf>

Wider issues, such as health, mental wellbeing, education and employment, cannot be properly addressed until accommodation is dealt with.

Between 2006 and 2013, local authorities failed to spend €50 million allocated by the Department of the Environment for Traveller accommodation. 'Underspending' on Traveller housing is an ongoing issue, with local authorities' own targets of provision continually being missed.

West Cork Travellers Centre
tel: 023.8635279
email: wctc@wctc.ie

Travellers of North Cork (TNC)
tel: 022.710335 and 022.710332
email: travellersnorthcork@live.com

Kerry Travellers Health and Community Development Project
tel: 066.720054
email: owenkhdp@eircom.net

Southern Traveller Health Network
tel: 081.0484272 and 081.2669024
email: sthname@gmail.com / rogan.annmarie@gmail.com

Cork Traveller Women's Network
tel: 086.3850136 and 086.777765
email: corktravellerwomen@hotmail.com

Traveller Visibility Group Ltd
tel: 021.4503786
email: tvcgork@gmail.com

This position paper has been developed by Traveller led community organisations from Cork and Kerry and sets out the main issues.

For further information about the Traveller accommodation crisis in Cork and Kerry, please contact any of the following agencies:

West Cork Travellers Centre
Travellers of North Cork (TNC)
Kerry Travellers Health and Community Development Project
Southern Traveller Health Network

Cork Traveller Women's Network
Traveller Visibility Group Ltd

HOW THE NEW GOVERNMENT CAN STOP THE CRISIS IN TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

1. Recognise Traveller ethnicity by the Irish State.
This is a priority. The UK and the Germanies Justice Committee back the State's recognition of Traveller ethnicity. Recognition would strengthen the cultural rights of the Traveller community. We call for immediate recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic group by the Irish State. Travellers are an Irish ethnic minority. There are approximately 600 Traveller families in Cork City, 410 in Cork County and 400 in Kerry.

There is a strong link for many Travellers between accommodation and identity.

2. Create a new, independent National Traveller Accommodation Agency.
Government reports have called for a national Traveller Accommodation Agency from as far back as 1996. Development of Traveller accommodation is currently the responsibility of local authorities (via national funding). After 17 years, this system has failed to provide culturally appropriate housing to meet the needs of the community. We call for the establishment of a new independent agency that can ensure delivery on the ground.

3. Increase and monitor the Traveller Accommodation Budget.
The National Traveller Accommodation Budget has been cut from €40 million to €3.5 million in 2016. We call for an urgent increase to the budget to meet the current accommodation crisis. We also call for a system of monitoring and sanction for local authorities who fail to deliver accommodation linked to budgetary allocations.

4. Ensure collaborative decision making around Traveller accommodation.
Although Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (LTACCs) have been set up under the Traveller Accommodation Act 1998, their decision making is controlled by local authorities. Travellers on these committees are often unheard, not given equal access to information and frustrated by lack of progress. LTACCs functioning in this way are not representative of the community. We call for independent committees and despite government policy, do not produce annual reports on their work. We call for independent regulation for LTACCs to ensure openness, effective delivery of accommodation and a commitment to real partnership. We also call for meaningful consultation and resident engagement in the creation of new and management of existing Traveller accommodation.

5. Monitor the 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) at a national level.
In Cork City County and Kerry the TAPs have been inadequate throughout the last 15 years. Lack of accommodation through the TAPs was evidenced by insufficient needs assessments, lack of clear targets, despite statutory obligations, and failure to implement plans. We call for a national monitoring and sanction system for local authority TAPs.

6. Ensure culturally appropriate options.
The option of Traveller Specific accommodation (halting site, group housing or standard housing) is not consistently catered for by councils – as it should be according to the Traveller Accommodation Act. At present, there are no clear routes for Travellers living in standard housing or in homelessness to move to Traveller-specific accommodation (a continuation of the old, discredited settlement policy). Traveller projects are conceived that many families have been forced into standard housing due to a lack of Traveller specific accommodation.

7. Implement recommendations of the NTACC Review of the Traveller Accommodation Act.
Operation of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998 as far back as 2004. It made a body of recommendations to strengthen the Act, which have not yet been implemented by local authorities.

8. Support Traveller nomadism.
Nomadism is an important aspect of Traveller culture. The Criminal Trespass Act (2002) has been disproportionately used against Travellers practicing nomadism and seasonal travelling – yet no transient halting sites were created. This law has also been inappropriately used by local authorities, against vulnerable homeless Travellers living on the roadside (Cork City 2014). We call for the creation of a national network of well managed, serviced transient Traveller halting sites to provide facilities for nomadic families. We further call on the repeal of the Criminal Trespass Act (2002).

9. Uphold the DoE's directive around fire and safety checks.
Following the Carrickmines tragedy, the Department of the Environment directed all local authorities to undertake fire and safety audits of Traveller accommodation without delay. This work must be carried out in partnership with Traveller residents and local Traveller Organisations. Reviews should not be used as a means to push Traveller families into standard housing (or to be evicted). Local authorities should be obliged to provide emergency Traveller-specific accommodation if a site cannot be made safe. We call for immediate fire and safety audits of all Traveller accommodation and the provision of appropriate emergency accommodation.

10. Plan effectively around the needs of Travellers experiencing homelessness.
Homelessness is a major crisis nationally. Travellers face additional barriers to securing suitable social housing and private rented homes. Many Traveller families are trapped couch surfing, in severely overcrowded houses, or living in caravans in parents' yards and driveways or other unauthorised areas without facilities. These families are not being recognised by the current system. Travellers seeking homes or have also been negatively affected by the 'habitual residence' condition, which discriminates against any families moving around. Travellers are also routinely refused emergency accommodation on the basis that they made themselves homeless, i.e. left the county to travel for a period of time, locally being punished for practising their culture. The particular impact of the housing crisis on Traveller families needs to be fully acknowledged. We also call for an end to evictions of families who have had to move caravans onto the road site due to homelessness and a commitment to providing supports for these families.

GOOD QUALITY TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION...

Travellers are an indigenous ethnic minority with long shared history, cultural values, languages, customs and tradition. Nomadism, the importance of the extended family, the Traveller language and preference for self-employment are aspects of Traveller culture.

The Traveller Accommodation Act makes provision for Traveller families to access:

- Traveller specific accommodation (halting site or group housing scheme)
- Standard local authority accommodation

There is a strong link for many Travellers between accommodation and identity. Recognising culture is essential in planning good quality Traveller specific accommodation.

Good quality, Traveller-specific accommodation ...

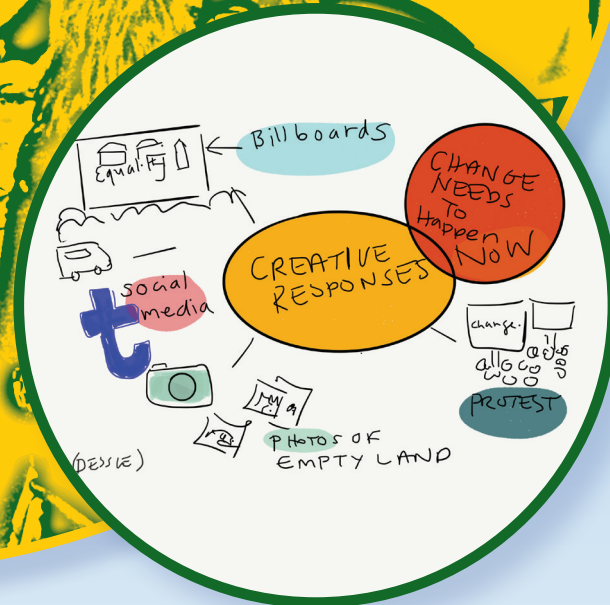
- Is developed in close consultation with the community.
- Recognizes the strong sense of community and the needs and compatibility of extended family groupings.
- Recognizes for the population structure of the Traveller community.
- With over 40% under the age of 15, plan for changing family structures.
- Traveller families also tend to be larger than non-Traveller families.
- Considers provision work space for traditional economic activities such as scrap collecting and Christmas Tree sales.
- Caters for certain members of the Traveller community who keep animals including horses (where required). Horses and horse ownership are an integral cultural trait of many Travellers. Legal responsible Traveller horse ownership needs to be supported by the state, via supporting horse projects, stabling and access to grazing land. It also needs to be facilitated where required alongside the provision of Traveller-specific accommodation.
- Provides adequate parking space for vehicles used by the family and visitors.
- Provides community facilities and play space.

Appendix 4: World Café information

There were 3 workshops held "world café" style as part of the conference; one after each of the key Traveller accommodation theme presentations. World Café methodology is a simple, effective and flexible format used to facilitate large group dialogue. Each world café discussion lasted up to 20 minutes and answers to the following questions were considered:

What are possible ways to better support the Traveller community seeking accommodation in this regard?

After the table discussions individuals from each table were invited to share insights from their discussions with the rest of the large group. As the next session was introduced each group member of the group rotated to new tables.



'change happens at the pace
of the comfortable'
—Dessie
Donnelly
(But EQUALITY CAN'T WAIT)

