

Traveller Visibility Group Cork

Traveller Men's Health & Development

Strategic Plan

2019-2024



Cork & Kerry Traveller Health Unit



Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
á Forbairt

Building a
Better Health
Service





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1. Introduction and Process

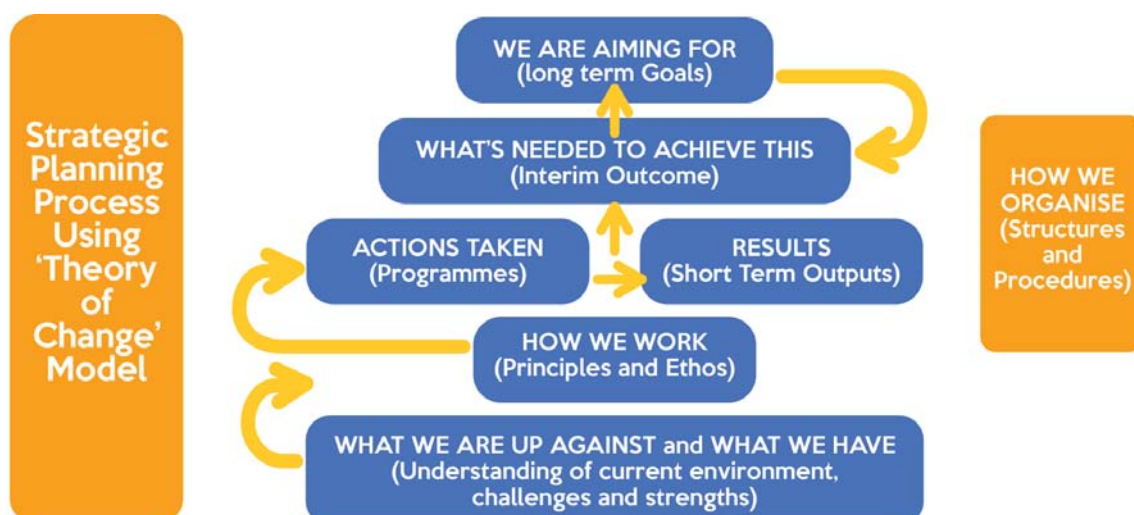
The Traveller Visibility Group (TVG) is a Traveller led Cork based organisation which brings the Traveller and the settled community together in order to facilitate community development work with the Traveller community. The group was established in the early 1990's.

In an overall sense, we are working with Travellers in Cork towards achieving real change and improvement in their lives. The foundation of our work is based on community development principles and practices, and we seek to bring these into all aspects of our work

The TVG team have had a focus on developing and supporting initiatives to improve the health of the Traveller community in Cork. There has been a particular focus on Traveller men's health as part of these initiatives, very much informed by an understanding of the wide range of social and economic circumstances that impact directly on the physical and mental health of Traveller men. Men's development to date in TVG has therefore spanned a wide range of issues and challenges including living conditions, education, employment, opportunities for progression and cultural identity.

This plan sets out aims, programmes of activity and hoped-for outcomes for the coming five years in relation to TVG's work with Traveller men in Cork. The plan is based on:

1. An analysis of issues and challenges raised as part of consultation and ongoing engagement of the project with Traveller men locally.
2. A structured review and planning process involving staff and volunteers currently engaged in TVG-led programmes and activities with Traveller men. This process followed the *Theory of Change* methodology, specifically designed to identify challenges, long-term goals, outcomes aimed for, and particular programmes of action and intervention (see diagram below).
3. Feedback of proposals and overall plan to both Traveller men locally and to representatives of relevant statutory service-providers. This allowed for presentation of the plan's actions and overall objectives, as well as for clarification of actions being proposed and the potential roles of different stakeholders in these actions.



2. Understanding the Existing Context and Challenges

The overall plan is based on an understanding of the current environment within which Traveller men in Cork live, and within which the project exists. This understanding has been informed by

- The issues and challenges currently identified by Traveller men themselves
- Current policies within which TVG operates, especially taking into account any changes in those policies.
- An acknowledgement of our own strengths as a project and as a Traveller community

2.1 Challenges and Issues Identified by Traveller Men

We base much of our understanding of current challenges and development issues on what is being said by Traveller men. The men we have engaged with have consistently identified significant challenges they face on a daily basis. These can be summarised under three broad headings:

- Challenges linked to accommodation and general living conditions.
- Challenges arising from their identity as Traveller men, their experience of discrimination and lack of recognition they experience linked to their cultural identity.
- Problems and barriers they face in their efforts to access opportunities for work, progression through education and training, or in securing employment.
- Specific challenges associated with horse keeping, the close connection many Traveller men have with horses, and concerns they have about being able to maintain that connection with horses.

2.1.1 Accommodation and General Living Conditions

Living conditions for Traveller men, as for many members of the Traveller community, are often deteriorating. Not only men living in Traveller-specific accommodation (halting sites or group housing schemes) reported this. It was also highlighted by men making efforts to access either private-rented accommodation or local authority housing. In such cases, the lack of options and the housing crisis generally, has impacted more severely on the Traveller community with numbers of homeless families on the increase.

Many of those men living in 'Traveller-specific' accommodation point to growing problems associated with overcrowding – in particular a lack of privacy and problems accessing basic

facilities and amenities. Increased overcrowding and deteriorating basic living conditions are adding to the already high incidence of poor physical and mental health, as well as to increased potential for anti-social and conflictual behaviour.

For Travellers living in sites without official status, these problems are further magnified, with negative impacts on both physical and mental health; as well as increased difficulties in accessing the services they need.

2.1.2 Self-Identity as Traveller Men

Men also point to what they see as major barriers to their right to express their own cultural and ethnic identity in a way that is free from prejudice, discrimination and stereo-typing. Traveller men have indicated increased experience of prejudice and discrimination on an everyday basis. This has the immediate and very serious effect of limiting venues that can be accessed by Traveller men (notably in relation to social and recreational venues). But it can also cause marked psychological damage, with a negative knock-on effect on the self-esteem and mental health of the individual. (One man described these negative effects as resulting from Traveller men 'receiving a clear message from society').

Increased pressure is also experienced in relation to Traveller men practising what they see as important elements of their own culture. Many gave horse ownership, and the importance of the horse in Traveller culture, as an example of this; with men finding it more and more difficult to maintain this association in the face of changing laws and enforcement of compliance with existing laws.

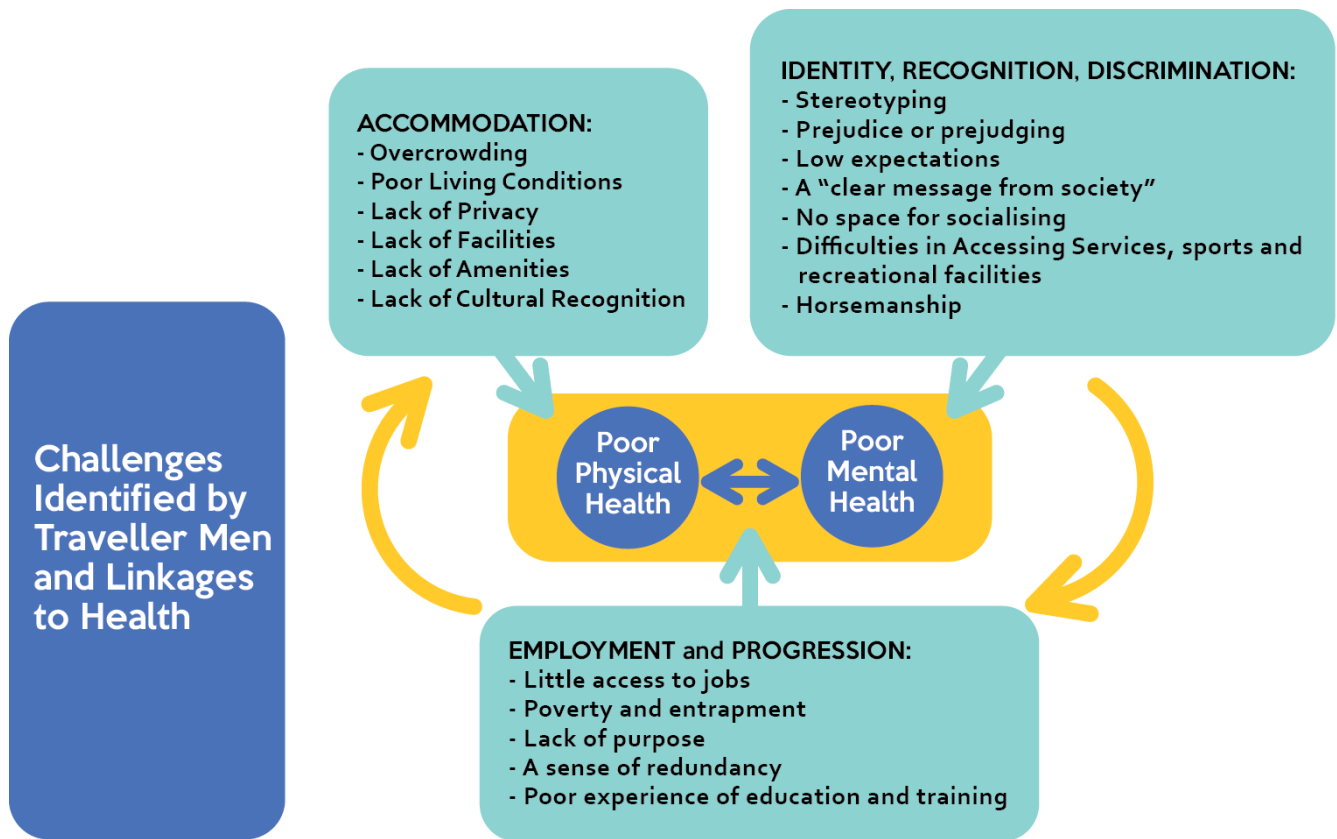
2.1.3 Opportunities for Progression

Some Traveller men pointed to low levels of expectation that exist amongst mainstream services as one blockage to accessing progression opportunities. Most had experienced this in the school system, but it continues to be apparent to many Traveller men when they try to avail of opportunities for education, training or employment.

Most, however, saw discrimination as the most significant barrier to their own progress – mainly experienced in attempts to seek employment. Prevailing high levels of unemployment and low income have continued to contribute to an overall picture of impoverishment for Traveller men (a situation one man described as 'entrapment'). Again, the psychological damage is also considerable. Traveller men point to a 'sense of purpose' being removed from them. They see little prospect of being able to fulfil the important role of looking after the family or of being the breadwinner, at the same time as other aspects of their culture and self-identity as Traveller men are under increasing threat.

2.1.4 Summary: Impact on Health

All of the issues and challenges raised by Traveller men have the potential to impact negatively upon both physical and mental health. This link is summarised in the diagram below.



TVG acknowledges the importance of these core issues and challenges faced by Traveller men as determining factors in their health generally. We also recognise the important causal links between these key challenges. Discrimination and stereo-typing in society creates barriers to opportunities for progression that may arise. Failure to access education and employment progression opportunities in turn adds to higher levels of impoverishment and poorer living conditions. Consistent with findings in the All Ireland Traveller Health Study, strong causal links are established between living conditions, social status, discrimination, physical and mental health. Poverty levels remain exceptionally high in the community, with high levels of unemployment and long-term health inequalities.

The overall goal of our project is to work with Traveller men to address the challenges outlined and to break the links between poor living conditions, discrimination, poverty and poor health.



2.2 The Policy Environment and Challenges for TVG

In assessing the current set of circumstances faced by Traveller men in Cork, TVG staff acknowledges the range of challenges identified. There is particular acknowledgement of:

- A continued deterioration in much of the accommodation and living conditions in the city.
- Increasing pressures and challenges for Traveller families, especially for those more vulnerable and excluded families, and for Traveller men in these situations.
- Evidence of increase in the levels and extent of discrimination faced by Traveller men. There is little indication of an acceptance of diversity in broader society.
- The continuing trend for young Traveller boys to experience the formal education system negatively, and to leave school early.
- An increased risk of internalised oppression and a range of social challenges (including substance misuse) related to this.

Added to this is the fact that Traveller men find themselves lacking a real voice, with few opportunities to influence service and other developments around them. As a project, we are committed to work with men to develop and strengthen this voice and are convinced of the benefits that will accrue if a stronger voice is created. But we are aware also of the challenges that exist in doing this. For example:

1. There is an increased tendency from mainstream service providers, and within the funding environment generally, for a project focus on service delivery and a lessening of importance placed on partnership-building with the target community. This presents significant challenges for the project, in terms both of delivering actions and programmes with Traveller men, and also of reviewing and reporting on these programmes.
2. There are significant limitations (determined by resources and numbers of personnel available) to what the project can hope to achieve. It is clear that a strong involvement and commitment from men on a voluntary basis must form a major part of our efforts if meaningful change and improvements are to come about.
3. The serious and deteriorating circumstances faced by Traveller men inevitably lead to crisis situations developing. The project is faced with responding to these crises (requiring interventions or supports in relation to accommodation, health or family support) almost on a daily basis. We are totally convinced of and committed to the goal of strengthening the voice of and building self-determination amongst Traveller men. If this focus is to be maintained, however, particular efforts need to be made by statutory services in particular to ensure that all of our very limited project resources are not taken up with continuous reaction to crises.

2.3 Acknowledging our Strengths

While the challenges are significant, we are also very much aware of the strong platform we have already built to carry through with this plan. It is seen as being particularly important that TVG has:

- A well-established capacity amongst Travellers themselves to direct and lead programmes and actions. A range of TVG-initiated programmes have Travellers at the centre in terms of planning and delivery (including programmes addressing health, childcare, community and youth development and substance misuse). This capacity for central involvement and participation is seen as being an essential contributor to TVG success to date, and will continue to underpin programmes into the future.
- Long-established roots and solid working connections with a significant proportion of the Traveller community in Cork. The project has, over the years, built up a strong awareness of challenges and changing needs of Travellers and Traveller families. Working relationships are based on mutual trust and respect, especially important in engagement with more excluded or vulnerable sections of the community.
- Effective and proven working relationships with local mainstream services and programmes. TVG has engaged in effective partnership arrangements with many of the main service providers including HSE, Local Authority, Education and Training Board, local schools, County Childcare Committee, Department of Social Protection, Local Development Company, Gardai, Probation and homeless agencies, Cork City Partnership, Youth services, UCC, CESCA partners, and community-based projects.
- Strong national allies and ties with Traveller and other supportive organisations.

With particular reference to Traveller men we also acknowledge strengths in relation to:

- A very strong sense of self-identity, historical relevance and resilience evident within Traveller men.
- A strong sense of family belonging and connection, as sons, brothers and fathers.
- The existing system of authority governing relations between men in the Traveller community, and the potential this offers to develop role models.

Finally, in March 2017 the Irish state officially acknowledged ethnic identity and status in relation to the Traveller community. While this does not in itself bring improvements or advance rights, we do view it as providing a platform upon which real progression can be legitimately fought for.



2.4 Review of Work to Date

TVG staff, as part of preparation for the strategic planning process, undertook a mapping of activities, outcomes and lessons arising from work with Traveller men to date. The project has worked with Traveller men over two decades, work that has spanned different parts of the city. Principally, these were men in:

- Spring Lane/Ballyvolane
- St. Anthony's Park, Knocknaheeny
- Fairhill/ Farranree, Blackpool, Nash's Boreen
- Mahon/Meelagh

In addition to community-specific interventions, some initiatives brought together Traveller men from different areas, notably through men's groups established on the southside of the city and through a men's leadership programme in 2010, organised on a regional basis.

A range of development issues and challenges for Traveller men were addressed, most significantly:

- Challenges linked to *accommodation*; with a focus on
 - needs assessment;
 - providing support and advocacy to men and their families;
 - supporting men in the Spring Lane accommodation campaign through building communication and media skills, legal knowledge and community consultation
 - community-led estate management initiatives
 - supporting Traveller men to represent community interests on accommodation fora
- Challenges associated with *physical and mental health*; with a focus on
 - Health needs assessments
 - Initiatives aimed at strengthening health awareness amongst Traveller men, including awareness around mental health and suicide
 - Physical exercise programmes
 - Programmes to promote positive mental health
 - Social events, outings and visits
 - Awareness building and supports around substance misuse and addiction

- Awareness building around diet and healthy eating
- Work with young Travellers with a positive mental health focus
- Increasing understanding about the causes and negative consequences of conflict
- Building awareness on domestic violence
- Supporting men to link with mainstream health services
- The need to strengthen *community leadership*, with a focus on:
 - Establishing men's groups in specific communities
 - Leadership programmes
 - Strengthening skills and competences in community development
 - Establishment of young Traveller men's groups and initiatives
- Challenges associated with cultural identity, with a focus on:
 - Encouraging self-organisation with Traveller men around horse ownership
 - Working for the establishment of facilities to recognise and accommodate horse ownership as a central part of Traveller culture
 - Assisting Traveller horse owners to become and remain compliant with regulations and legislation
 - Enhancing and keeping alive the inherent skills connected with horse ownership
 - Challenging discrimination against Traveller men
 - Working with Traveller men to promote pride in their culture and identity, including work with Traveller men in prison.
- Challenges associated with *progression* for Traveller men, with a focus on:
 - Job-related skills training programmes, including courses in woodwork, horticulture, computer skills, photography
 - One-to-one supports with job seeking, as well as CV preparation, completion of forms, reading forms, social welfare difficulties, going to appeals, attending appointments with individuals, job applications etc
 - Establishing links with employers, notably through the Cork City Council Employment Initiative
 - Basic personal skills, including work with men on literacy, money management, community leadership and conflict resolution



- Development of culturally-relevant skills including farrier skills and cart building
- Work with Traveller men's groups to identify and address barriers to young Travellers remaining in school and completing their education.

The general picture was one of positive engagement by a large number of Traveller men of different ages. Ongoing engagement over the years has established a strong basis for trust in most areas. Importantly, the various activities have contributed positively to the engagement of Traveller men in structures and initiatives addressing broader development issues and challenges – for example the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, estate management meetings and the Spring Lane accommodation campaign.

An important outcome overall has been improved intergenerational communication (Traveller men and their sons).

Some of the barriers and difficulties identified by workers in the context of men's development included:

- Men engaged with are more often than not living a chaotic lifestyle, and crises arising periodically can have a negative effect on continuity – in terms both of group work and one-to one supports
- Extremely high levels of early school leaving, even still amongst the younger boys results in ongoing literacy difficulties, and issues in progressing onto further training, and employment in the regular economy
- Mental health difficulties affecting many of the men personally
- Difficulties in accessing comfortable and suitable venues for some group activities
- Very severe levels of frustration amongst the men with regard to lack of response from mainstream services or programmes (especially true in relation to failure to address serious accommodation issues)
- Serious ongoing difficulties in accessing opportunities for work, and major challenges in meeting criteria for any form of social enterprise or business start-up
- Challenges connected with bringing together men from different families or locations, where differences or the potential for conflict exist
- Many signs of what could be described as internalised oppression, expressed often in destructive or self-destructive behaviour
- Negative effects of discrimination or prejudice experienced by the men, resulting in some of them feeling the need to hide their identity as Travellers.

2.5 Our Mission

Given this analysis, the overall aim of TVG Traveller Men's Development Programme is about working towards a situation where:



“There will be an increased hope, self-belief and self-determination amongst Traveller men, contributing to joint positive action, real change, protection and advancement of equality and human rights, and ultimately to improvements in accommodation conditions and standard of life.”

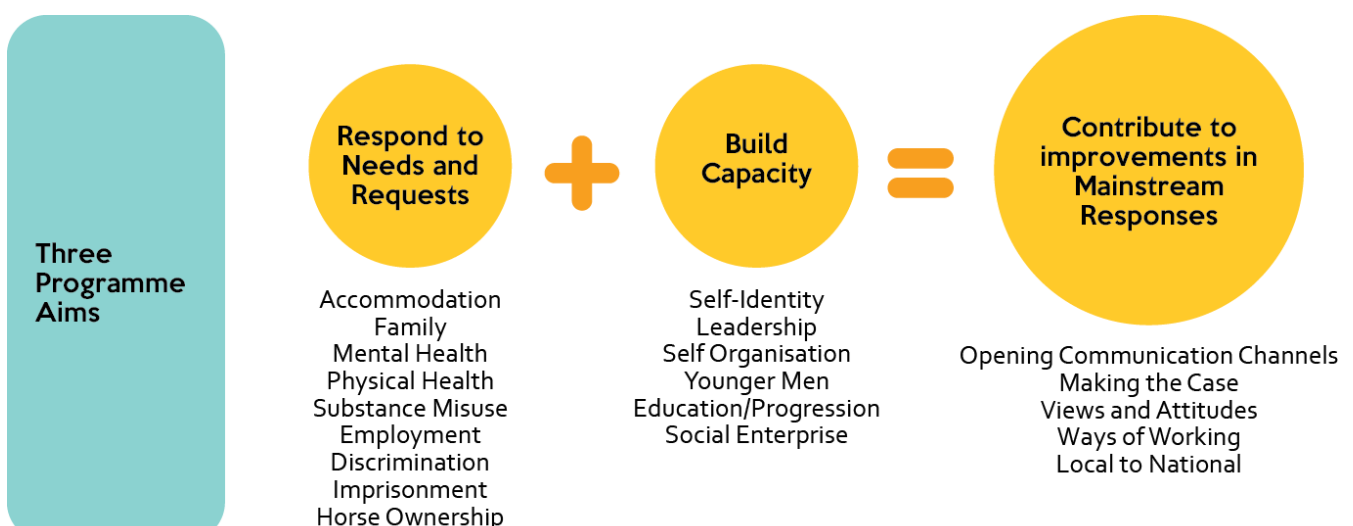
3. Strategic Goals and Outcome Indicators

3.1 Goals

Our plan for Traveller men's development over the coming five years has three main goals:

1. Firstly, **to respond to the needs and requests for assistance from Traveller men on an ongoing basis, with active support from relevant external statutory agencies**. These needs are ongoing (especially in relation to living conditions, experience of discrimination, health-related and other statutory entitlements, horse ownership, access to services, etc.); and our response needs to be both ongoing and flexible.
2. Secondly, TVG's primary role is **to build capacity amongst Traveller men for self-organisation and self-representation**.
3. Thirdly, **to contribute to improvements in mainstream responses to the significant and pressing needs of Traveller men**.

We see these three programme aims as being very much connected (as shown in diagram below). As a project, we will remain committed to responding to the needs of Traveller men (we anticipate that the majority of requests will arise in relation to accommodation, family support, health, substance misuse, education and employment). We also anticipate requests in relation to Traveller men in prison and within the criminal justice system, horse ownership, and access to general services. However we also see it as vital that the capacity of men themselves is strengthened, and our second aim is focused on working with Traveller men to build up, self-identity, leadership, the potential for self-organisation and personal progression. Work towards this second goal is essential if the causes of exclusion, poverty and poor health are to be addressed and real change for Traveller men brought about in the longer term.



It is essential that results and experience gained in working towards the first two goals (responding to needs and building capacity) are brought forward to influence our third goal (contributing to improvements in mainstream service responses to the needs of Traveller men). Our ongoing efforts to respond to Traveller men's needs provide us with first-hand experience and insights into the kinds of responses that are needed at a broader mainstream service level. We intend to communicate these insights and lessons into our ongoing liaison with mainstream service providers (especially in relation to accommodation, health and cultural identity). This will be done on a service-by-service basis, but also through interagency and joint agency structures where relevant.

We are also aiming in the medium term, through our capacity-building work under Goal 2, to reach the point where Traveller men can themselves feed these lessons and insights back to mainstream service providers. We see this as positively contributing to more informed, appropriate, effective and efficient work with Traveller men in the longer term. Increased mutual understanding can contribute to more informed attitudes and better joint working relationships. Ultimately this will contribute to enhanced service delivery (in relation to TVG as well as to mainstream service providers).

We recognise that local services delivery is largely influenced by national policy developments. TVG will seek to continue with our efforts to positively contribute to this national policy agenda as it relates to improvements in living conditions and opportunities for Traveller men. We will do this through active engagement with the rollout of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS), as well as through active involvement in Traveller organisations and initiatives at the national level.

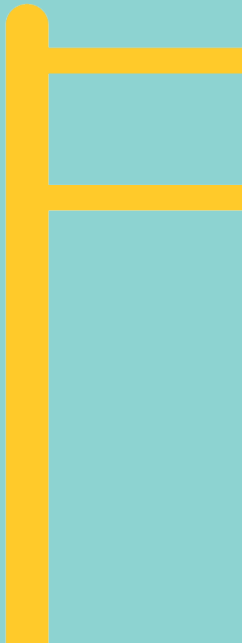
3.2 Outcome Indicators

We have a focus in work under all three goals to have positive outcomes. Agreed indicators fall under three categories.

a. Outcomes for Traveller Men

The first and most important set of outcome indicators informing our five-year strategic plan are to do with improvements in position, circumstances and conditions for Traveller men. We are aiming for:

- Traveller men to become more self-assured, confident and proud of their roles in family and community.
- The positive strengths of Traveller men to be recognised and acknowledged, and positive role models to be created as a result.
- Traveller men to be more active in their own community, more vocal in expressing their needs, upholding their rights, and more effective in accessing relevant services.



- Traveller men and their families securing adequate and appropriate accommodation and living conditions for themselves and their families.
- Increased participation of Traveller men in education and training initiatives, as well as in mainstream employment.
- Traveller Horse ownership acknowledged, supported and resourced
- As a result of the above, marked improvements in physical and mental health and wellbeing amongst Traveller men. We are aiming also for reductions in social problems currently associated with high levels of exclusion, marginalisation and lack of awareness. These include:
 - Reductions in substance misuses and addiction levels
 - Reductions in conflict and increased tendency towards collective action
 - Reductions in number of Traveller men in prison and with probation services.
 - Reductions in violence against women and levels of violence generally
- Particular improvements in relation to younger Traveller men and boys. We especially want to see:
 - Young Traveller boys staying longer in education and training initiatives that are appropriate to their needs
 - Young Traveller men/boys becoming more actively engaged in structured activity
- Reduction in negative stereotyping of Traveller men by wider society.

b. Outcomes in Relation to Mainstream Services and Agencies

Such improvements for Traveller men will not come about through the efforts of TVG alone. It will require effective working relationships, joint understanding and collaboration with a range of mainstream service providers, agencies and programmes. In our interaction with service providers through the lifetime of our strategic plan, we are aiming towards:

- The development and nurturing of a real will for change, following on from official state recognition of Traveller ethnicity, and a joint commitment to agree on how that change might come about. In this way some real meaning can be given to ethnic recognition being recognised in practice, and we believe that this can begin through commitment to effective use of ethnic identifiers by service providers.
- A commitment across state agencies to ensure that professional standards are enshrined in everyday service and agency dealings with Traveller men, and that these standards are monitored and reviewed. Especially important here are standards and protocols laid out in Public Sector Duty requirements and in customer service charters.

- Services becoming more responsive, more informed and more aware of Traveller culture; and the potential for bias, stereo-typing, victimisation or pre-judging decreased.
- Services becoming more tailored to specific gender needs.
- Mainstream service providers and mainstream development programmes becoming more open to taking on lessons from community-based practice in relation to Traveller men, acknowledging the mutual benefits that arise from good practice based on solid evidence of outcomes (based on a continuing evaluation of participation and participant outcomes)

c. Outcomes in Relation to TVG

Our strategic planning process has also highlighted the need for increased and more active involvement of Traveller men within TVG structures themselves. Over the lifespan of the plan, we want to see:

- A movement towards working *with* Traveller men rather than *for* Traveller men as the period of the strategic plan progresses. While we recognise the need to continue to engage with services on behalf of men, and to respond to specific needs as they arise, there is a clear need to ensure that sufficient TVG time and resources are invested in leadership and capacity building.
- Traveller men becoming active and effective in engagement with services and the building of partnerships in interagency settings.
- An increase in the numbers and influence levels of Traveller men in leadership of TVG-led activities and programmes, as well as in TVG decision-making structures, including in the TVG board of management.

Outcome indicators are summarised overleaf.

Three Sets of Outcomes

For Traveller Men

- A meaningful role for Traveller men is created and recognised (don't feel they have to hide identity, a sense of purpose and validation within family and society)
- Positive role models are created and the strengths of Traveller men are recognised and utilised
- Men are more active in the community (including employment in wider community)
- Men engaging with services, successfully upholding their rights
- Young Traveller boys stay longer in education and training that is appropriate to their needs
- Young Traveller men/boys become actively engaged in structured activity
- Increased opportunities
- Living conditions are culturally appropriate, good quality for men and their families
- Reduction in addiction and mental health problems
- Reduction in conflict/internalised oppression
- Reduction in violence against women and domestic violence generally

For Agencies & Services

- Following recognition of ethnicity, a will for change is created
- Awareness of obligations
- Professional standards are monitored and ensured
- Some real meaning is given to Traveller ethnicity and it is recognised in practice (including ethnic identifier)
- Less stereotyping
- Services are more responsive and the potential for bias is eliminated
- Reduction in specific stereotyping of Traveller men
- Reduction in potential for victimisation and harassment
- Services more conscious and tailored to specific gender needs

For TVG

- More work *with* men, less work *for* men
- More older Traveller men being active and leading activities
- Leadership is nurtured, supported and built upon
- Clear partnership model developed and communicated in an interagency setting
- Traveller men to be involved in TVG management

4. Programmes of Action

We have three Action Programmes, corresponding to our three strategic goals. These are:

Programme 1: Ongoing Engagement with Traveller Men and Responding to Needs

We see the demand continuing from Traveller men for support across a range of issues and challenges they face. TVG will continue to respond to these demands in a professional and timely manner, while at the same time building relationships with Traveller men in different age groups and from different families on an ongoing basis. Providing information, advocacy and support will be given in relation especially to:

- *Accommodation and living conditions*, with particular focus on men who face additional challenges in this respect (for example men who are coming out of prison, men trying to build recovery from addiction and mental health difficulties, or men living on unofficial sites)
- *Family support*, where responding to the needs of men of different age groups and different family types is important (for example gay men, older men and men raising children on their own)
- *Support and direction around mental health*, in which provision of basic information is important, as is the establishment of links with mental health services in some cases.
- *Support for men facing discrimination* is important in combating the potential for low self-esteem and stress (for example through intergenerational work with horses to support and improve mental health status).
- *Support and direction around physical health*, including initiatives to promote positive physical health, promotion of self-monitoring and health awareness, as well as establishing links with health service providers.
- *Support and direction around substance misuse and addiction*, including counselling and support, advocating with services in relation to culturally informed practice, supporting families affected by substance misuse and addiction, and building awareness about substance misuse amongst Traveller men generally.

Actions under Programme One, together with outputs and outcomes aimed for, are summarised overleaf.

Programme 1: Ongoing Engagement with Traveller Men and Responding to Needs

Action	Details / Participants / Partners	Outputs (short-term)	Outcomes (longer term)
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to ongoing crises/ advocating • Accommodation needs of men coming out of institutions • Accommodation needs of men in recovery • Combating exclusion through criminality/anti-social behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust built up through listening and supporting • Damage limitation • Services are held to account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Traveller specific accommodation • Reduction in homelessness • Reduced instances of discrimination
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing positive role models for men as family and community members • Supporting younger boys (eg school settings) • Supporting older men (eg widowers) • Supporting men raising children on their own • Supporting single men with no family • Supporting gay men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of difference • Family support links created • Increased family stability • Increased self-confidence • Improved inter and intra family solidarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of difference in broader community • Improved family and community cohesion
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving information • Encouraging people to self refer or get referral support worker • Having structured conversations (especially Assist) • Supporting people around discrimination/oppression • Responding to requests RE horses • Creating 'get away' opportunities • Making accommodation/mental health links • Informing/responding to mental health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better self image • Better awareness • Mandated referrals and self-referrals • People more empowered and self-empowered • Self-organisation in horse ownership established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in suicide • Attitudes towards mental health issues and services within communities are improved • Internalised oppression lessened • Enhanced capacity to fight for rights based on ethnic recognition • Horse Initiative
Physical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing and advising • Organising activities (individual and group) • Monitoring and promoting self-monitoring • Supporting links with mainstream health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater self awareness • Heightened physical activity • Positive role models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher life expectancy amongst Traveller men
Substance Misuse and Addiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling and support • Advocating with services • Supporting affected families • Building awareness • Addressing challenges RE dual diagnosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased commitments to recovery process • Reduction in take-up levels • Higher service access levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services more knowledgeable RE Traveller-appropriate responses • Reduction in substance-misuse • Increase in harm-reduction methods

Programme 2: Building Capacity with Traveller Men

These set of actions are aimed at enabling Traveller men to become more able to identify and respond to their own needs and challenges they face. We will be establishing initiatives and actions around:

- *Building leadership amongst Traveller men*, with particular focus on identifying potential for leadership within specific communities, learning programmes, establishing mechanisms whereby Traveller men can take on leadership roles within TVG, and promotion of capacity to engage with various forms of media.
- *Building and supporting self-organisation*, supporting the development of organisational structures around issues seen as important by Traveller men; and building the capacity for these organisations to have an influence.
- *Capacity-building actions with young Traveller men and boys*, building capacity for self-organisation and strong leadership amongst young Traveller boys, as well as supporting initiatives to support young Traveller men progressing through education and into employment.
- *Building capacity for progression*, especially through supporting Traveller men to identify and pursue their own progression pathways, and to enhance their own knowledge and skills. Establishing links locally with potential employers will be an important part of this.
- *Supporting enterprise*, enabling Traveller men to identify potential ideas for social enterprise, providing support for researching these ideas, and building up capacity to establish sustainable initiatives.

Actions under Programme Two, together with outputs and outcomes aimed for, are summarised overleaf.

Programme 2: Building Capacity with Traveller Men

Action	Details / Participants / Partners	Outputs (short-term)	Outcomes (longer term)
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and acknowledging leadership potential Leadership programme for Traveller men Supporting men in taking on project roles Communication strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traveller men more proactive and influential in TVG Leaders emerging in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved and less prejudiced public perceptions Traveller men are acknowledged and respected as leaders More positive mental and physical health
Self Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting development of organisational structures Challenging factors impacting on physical and mental health (eg. poor living conditions and discrimination) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Traveller men's groups emerging Self-advocacy groups established around elements of Traveller culture (for example horse ownership) Traveller men's voice stronger and influential in joint agency structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural identity recognised, positively promoted and preserved Reduced levels of discrimination Increased community understanding and mutual respect
Younger Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building youth organisation Building youth leadership Social awareness programmes for young Traveller men Support programme (peer-based) within mainstream education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role models created Strengthened self-identity Increased networking amongst young Traveller men and boys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More positive mental health Better physical health Higher levels of achievement for young Traveller men and boys
Progressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support programme (peer-based) for those left mainstream education Creating opportunities for enhanced skills Supporting access to employment opportunities Supporting Travellers in prison and their families Establishing links with employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher school participation Higher participation in training Increased self-advocacy for Travellers in prison Travellers coming out of prison access progression opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher educational achievements Greater access to employment and more Traveller men in full time employment Reduction in levels of re-offending

Programme 3: Contributing Positively to Mainstream Service Responses

Actions under Programme 3 are aimed at creating improvements in mainstream service responses and service delivery. This will be done mainly through bringing our own knowledge about what works well, where and how forward to interactions with mainstream service providers. We will be engaging in actions around:

- *Building up an evidence base and 'making the case'.* We gather information and experience on an everyday basis about the links between various challenges faced by Traveller men (for example links between living conditions and general health, or links between the experience of discrimination and poor mental health). We intend to make these links explicit through collecting evidence from experience. We also intend to collect evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness and benefits of particular approaches taken to working with Traveller men, and to communicate the results of this to mainstream service providers.
- *Changing views and attitudes,* in society generally but also in a more targeted way in relation to mainstream service provision. TVG will use media and social media in efforts to positively influence public opinion and will engage in more targeted efforts to increase awareness about Traveller culture and the needs of Traveller men amongst providers of frontline services.
- *Clarifying and formalising joint working relationships.* We will endeavour to establish agreements with relevant mainstream service providers that will govern working relationships with Traveller representative organisations. The aim here will be to establish common agreement on principles and goals, as well as acknowledgement of each other's strengths and potential weaknesses.
- *Linking local to national,* including the maintenance of strong links with Traveller organisations at the national level, and actions to ensure that Traveller men learn from and share experiences with Traveller men in other parts of the country.

Actions under Programme Three, together with outputs and outcomes aimed for, are summarised overleaf.

Programme 3: Contributing Positively to Mainstream Service Responses

Action	Details / Participants / Partners	Outputs (short-term)	Outcomes (longer term)
Making the Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting evidence – eg. accommodation/healthlinks; discrimination/healthlinks Identifying good practice and demonstrating positive outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons and demonstrated outcomes are communicated to relevant agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in service delivery based on informed and established good practice Services and resources are targeted at those most in need
Changing Views and Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to promote Traveller culture and improve community relations Actions to increase awareness amongst frontline service providers Positive use of media Positive use of social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater general understanding, tolerance Capacity for mutual respect created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased support for diversity Improved community relations Discrimination challenged and eliminated
New Ways of Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A charter to clarify meanings, aims and intentions, protocols to govern working relationships between service providers and Traveller representative groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More efficient and successful approaches to joint working and cooperation established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased efficiency and enhanced value for money in service provision
Linking Local to National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building and maintaining links with relevant national organisations Enabling exchange of information and experience between Travellers in Cork and Travellers elsewhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacity for learning, validation of experiences and identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution to development and implementation of inclusive policies at national level



5. Key Values Underpinning the Work

TVG will continue to attach and actively support an approach to the work that places Traveller men and their families at the centre of the development process. We are guided at all levels of the work by an approach that is both person-centred and human rights-based.

A Person-Centred Approach

At all operational levels we are committed to promoting an approach that:

- Invests time and effort in listening to and understanding personal circumstances and challenges.
- Recognising difference and uniqueness, avoiding the potential for generalising about circumstances and needs.
- Demonstrates compassion, empathy and a duty of care.
- Offers people the chance and the space to understand the causes of the challenges they face – not just the consequences.
- Provides professional and effective support, but also engages in advocacy where appropriate and at all stages promotes self-determination.
- Avoids pre-judging and opposes prejudice.

A Human Rights-Based Approach

At all operational levels we are committed to promoting an approach that:

- Treats people as people: defining people by who they are and not what their problems are.
- Recognises the entitlement of everyone to a high level of service provision.
- Recognises the constitutional rights of all as citizens.
- Promotes, respects and facilitates the right to feel safe.
- Promotes, respects and facilitates the right to question.
- Promotes, respects and facilitates the right to self-direction and choice.
- Promotes, respects and facilitates the right to have privacy respected.
- Promotes, respects and facilitates the right to be represented.
- Encourages and promotes collective responsibility.
- Upholds the right to influence local decisions and local decision-makers.

- Opposes and challenges individuals, organisations and institutions that deny rights and/or engage in discriminatory practice.
- Promotes and supports the progression of Traveller men internally in the TVG in both staffing and Board of management membership.

We will ensure that these core values are embedded at all levels of implementation of the TVG overall strategic plan, in particular through:

1. Ongoing review of activities and services supported by TVG.
2. Incorporation of core values and ethos in training programmes designed and/or delivered by TVG.
3. Active promotion of core values and ethos with mainstream service providers, and provision of support for these services developing consistent approaches in their own fields of operation.
4. Inclusion of core values in overall review of TVG activities and evaluation of strategic plan actions. We will assess *how* progress is made as well as *what* progress is made.
5. Continuously up skilling of TVG staff and through the development of a knowledge and practice base to facilitate the community development process



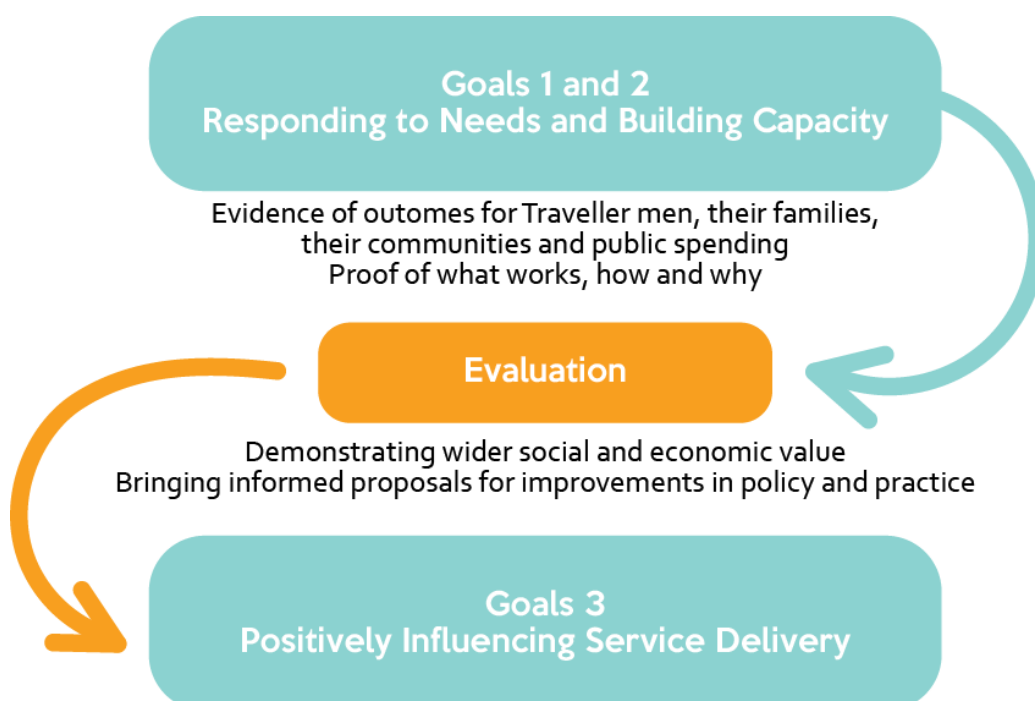
6. Evaluation and Review

We are setting out in this plan to have positive outcomes for Traveller men and to have positive effects on the wider service response environment. In so doing, we are especially aware of the importance of bringing local knowledge and learning to bear on the process of improving services and broader planned interventions.

Evaluation is key to making this link on an informed basis. We will be carrying out continuous evaluation and review as a means of building TVG's sphere of influence on the basis of evidence, demonstrable results and lessons emerging.

Evaluation activities therefore provide continuous linkages between our three strategic goals. Review and evaluation are not activities to be undertaken at the end of our strategic planning period. They rather provide the mechanism through which experience on the ground (in addressing causes and effects of challenges faced by Traveller men) is translated into positive and effective recommendations for change to broader mainstream policy and service delivery. This link is demonstrated in the diagram below.

Evaluation as the Key Link Between TVG Strategic Goals



TVG is committed to evaluation as an integral part of our development activities with Traveller men throughout the strategic planning period because we recognise the importance of:

1. The ever increasing need to demonstrate results in relation to resources invested. We are committed to demonstrating that TVG-supported activities not only succeed in achieving the objectives and targets we have set ourselves, but that they also make economic sense in terms of broader outcomes.
2. Secondly, we are aware that impacts of TVG initiatives go beyond individual Traveller men engaging in our programmes or accessing our services. There are also clear benefits for families and for the wider Traveller community. We are committed to demonstrating these benefits, both in the short and longer term. We are also committed to using evidence to demonstrate the benefits of a more inclusive and holistic approach for mainstream service-providers and for Irish society generally.
3. Thirdly, we are also strongly aware that successful outcomes are very much dependent upon the active involvement of the community, and of the particular approach taken to working within communities. Our evaluation efforts will not only show what we have achieved; we will also focus on how these achievements have come about. We are committed to ongoing critical reflection on what works well and what may not – informed at all stages by participant and community member feedback. As a result we will be able to demonstrate (and share) the TVG ‘model’, and how particular approaches and interventions can contribute to particular results.
4. Finally, we see lessons and insights emerging from the work as being of significant importance in shaping effective mainstream responses to social exclusion, education, accommodation, health and other key challenges faced by Traveller men. Our evaluation and review process will provide a mechanism through which these lessons are captured, and then shared with our working partners within mainstream service provision and policy development.

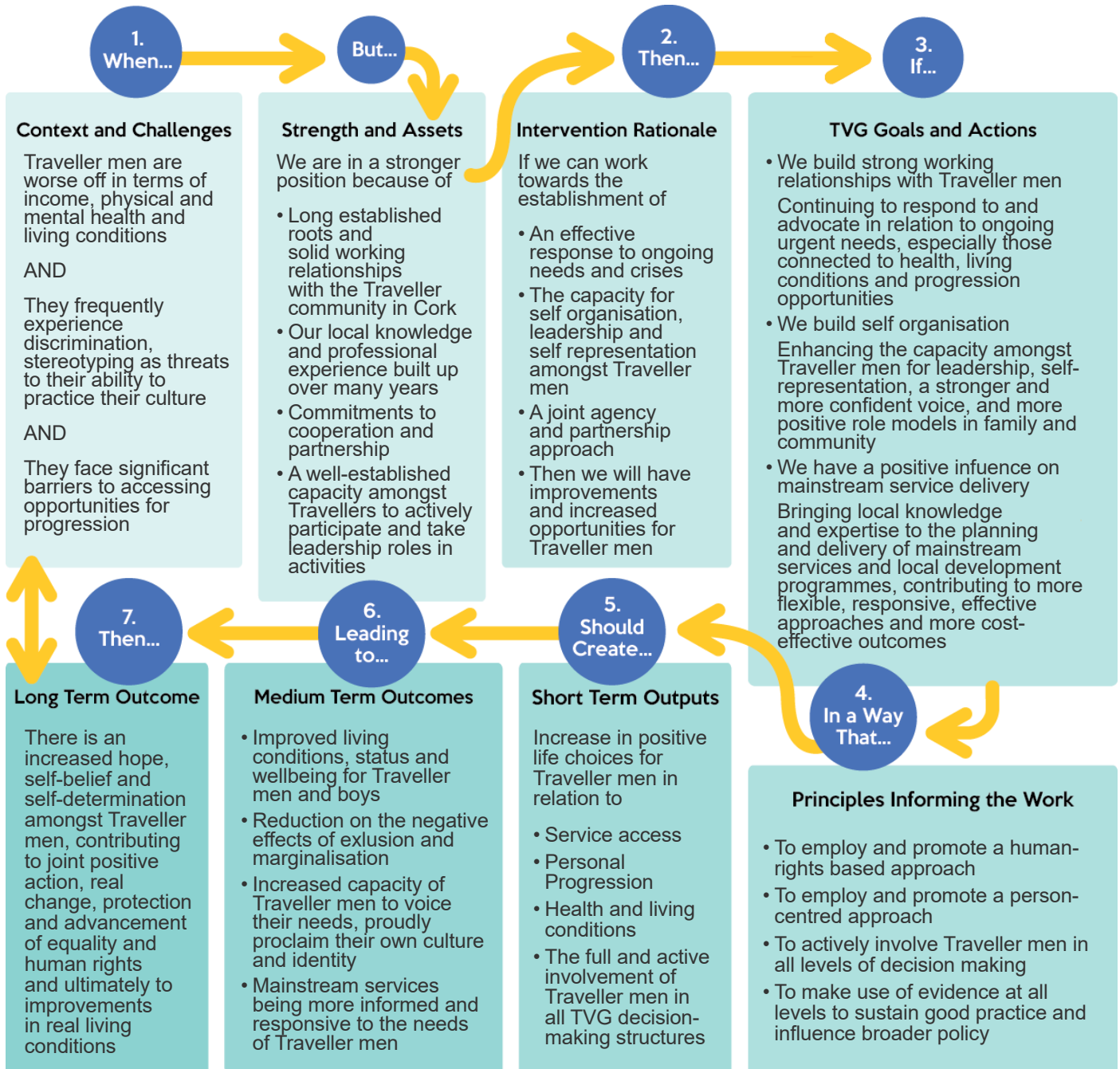
Our approach to evaluation and review is based on the ‘Theory of Change’ approach: with an emphasis on understanding changing and evolving circumstances; setting clear aims, and increasing the organisation’s capacity to link and understand inputs and outputs on an ongoing basis.

Internal evaluation and outcome-data collection will be built into all programmes and actions, and will become an integral part of the work carried out by TVG workers and volunteers. Weekly staff and volunteer meetings will facilitate ongoing monitoring and re-focusing of efforts where required.

The overall plan will also be externally evaluated to demonstrate outcomes, impacts and lessons for the future.

The chart overleaf presents a summary of the TVG strategic plan, making use of the seven-step “*Theory of Change*” model.

TVG Traveller Men Theory of Change 2019-2024



Annex 1: Evaluation Guidelines

Evaluation and review of the Plan will take place through three interrelated processes:

1. Ongoing ‘built-in’ *assessment of progress and lessons*. All programme and actions will incorporate participant-led evaluation. This will involve:
 - a. Establishing agreement with participants on action-specific outcome indicators in line with general programme outcome indicators (“what will tell us that progress is being made in the right direction?”)
 - b. Use of these indicators to collect feedback from stakeholders on a regular basis (both programme participants and external stakeholders where relevant) to assess effectiveness of actions
 - c. Collection of feedback from participants in programmes and actions on both facilitating factors and perceived barriers to progress (“what is helping us to achieve our objectives and what is hindering us?”)
 - d. Planning sessions with participants to make joint decisions on the need for change of orientation or focus (where relevant, based on learning)
2. *Interim evaluation*. This will take place at a mid-way point in roll-out of the plan (during 2021) and will involve:
 - a. Collection of results of internal ongoing assessment from all staff and volunteers (summarising both outcomes and lessons emerging)
 - b. Preparation of a progress report (measured against overall Strategic Plan objectives and drawing out learning points to date)
 - c. Joint evaluation workshop (involving staff, volunteers and board members, but also external stakeholders if deemed relevant).
 - d. Decisions on the need for reorientation or refocus for the remaining plan timeframe.
3. *Final evaluation*. This will be contracted out, based on a formal terms of reference to measure outcomes against strategic plan indicators, and will be carried out during the latter stages of the plan timeframe (late 2024).

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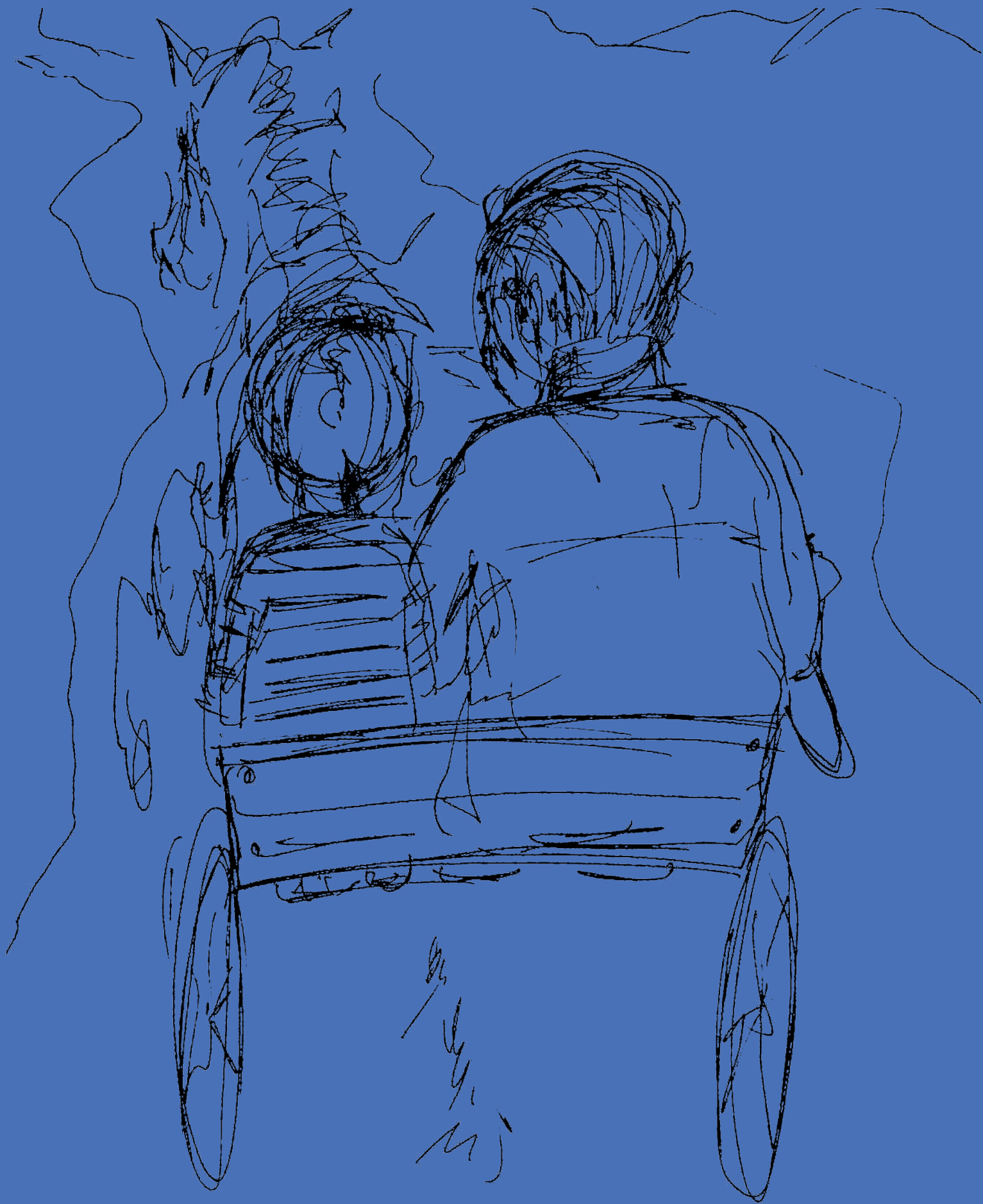
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