

Traveller Employment

Travellers traditionally carry out a range of economic activities including recycling, tin-smithing, seasonal labour and door-to-door selling.



Modernisation saw the destruction of the traditional Traveller economic base, a move by Travellers to town and cities and a subsequent dependency on Social Welfare payments.

The State attitude to Traveller unemployment has largely been to educate and train Travellers to operate within the mainstream labour force. However, Census 2016 shows a staggering 80% unemployment in the Traveller community compared to a 12.9% unemployment rate in general.

Travellers are not benefitting from current Government back to work and enterprise schemes. The Government needs to lead the way on Traveller Employment by introducing positive discrimination and employing Travellers within the civil service. A targeted outreach approach is needed to ensure that another generation of Irish Travellers is not excluded.

DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Discrimination in the workplace has also proved to be a significant barrier to Traveller employment.

A study by Micheál MacGreil Maynooth University 2010 showed 41% of people were not willing to employ a Traveller.

An IHREC/ESRI report in 2017 'Who experiences discrimination in Ireland?' shows Irish Travellers are 10 times more likely than White Irish to experience discrimination when seeking work.

IMPACT OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment and reduced social circumstances combine to produce feelings of negativity, depression and low self-worth.

Many young Travellers say they see little point in staying on at school because there is little or no chance of gaining employment due to discrimination in the workplace.

Many Travellers are forced to hide their identity to get a job or to stay in a job. This has negative knock on effects that can affect well-being and mental health.

TYPES OF WORK BY GENDER

Approximately 30% of Traveller women aged over 15 years were looking after the home, according to Census 2016.

The majority of Traveller women employed were working in caring personal service occupations, administration, health professionals, sales and other service occupations.

The majority of Traveller men who are employed work in the construction industry, elementary trades, service occupations, sales and other stated occupations.