Irish Travellers have been documented as being part of Irish society for centuries. Travellers have a long shared history, traditions, language, culture, customs and tradition. The distinctive Traveller lifestyle and culture, based on a nomadic tradition, sets Travellers apart from the sedentary population or ‘settled people’.

“Being a Traveller is the feeling of belonging to a group of people. Knowing through thick or thin, they are there for you, having support of family systems. Having an identity.”

- Michael McDonagh

Life expectancy for Traveller men is 15 years less for Traveller men and 12 years less for Traveller women than those in the general population. Census 2011 showed that 55% of Travellers leave school before the age of 15; only 1% of Travellers attain a third level qualification (All Ireland Health Study, 2010).

Contrary to popular opinion, most Travellers now live in houses (73.3%), followed by trailer/mobile home or caravan (18.2%), according to the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010).

According to the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010), there are 36,224 Travellers in the Republic of Ireland, with a further 3,905 in Northern Ireland. Irish Travellers are one of the most marginalized and excluded groups in Irish society, facing an 84% unemployment rate. According to the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010), over 2,700 Travellers do not have access to running water. The Traveller suicide rate is six times the national average for men and women. In considering men alone, the suicide rate is seven times the national average.