



TRAVELLERS IN IRELAND

KEY RESULTS FROM THE ROMA AND TRAVELLERS SURVEY 2019



The survey in a nutshell

FRA asked 4,659 Roma or Travellers aged 16 years or older in Belgium, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom about their socio-demographic situation and experiences of discrimination. In addition, the survey collected information on 8,234 individuals living in the respondents' households and about the infrastructure of halting sites or neighbourhood. The interviews took place between December 2018 and July 2019. The results also draw on information from other sources about people in Ireland generally. The [survey report](#) is online.

In Ireland, the survey covered only Travellers in the Republic of Ireland. Roma were not part of this survey as the Irish Roma population is very small.

The survey shows that in Belgium, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK **discrimination against Roma and Travellers is common**. In the year before the survey, 45% felt discriminated against, 44% experienced hate-motivated harassment and 7% hate-motivated physical attacks. This is higher than in another FRA survey where, on average, 30% of Roma in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain had the same experience.

Data elsewhere show that 45% of Europeans feel uncomfortable with having Roma or Travellers as neighbours.

Of the Roma and Travellers that were attacked, 53% did not report it because they thought nothing would happen or change if they did; 16% did not report it because they did not know who to contact.

Only 53% of Roma and Travellers know of laws against discrimination. Only 33% know an institution that deals with discrimination and equality in their country.



Findings in Ireland

Discrimination and awareness of rights

In the year before the survey, overall **discrimination** (when looking for work, at work, in education, health, housing and other public or private services) among Irish Travellers (65%) is one of the highest among all survey groups from the different countries. There is little difference between men and women.

More Travellers (49%) are **aware of at least one Irish equality body** (Equality Tribunal, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission or Office of the Ombudsman) compared to Travellers or Roma in other countries.

Similarly, in Ireland **awareness of laws against discrimination** based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion is among the highest (58%).

Most did not report or file a complaint about the discrimination they experienced. The proportion of Traveller respondents who **reported or filed a complaint** in Ireland (28%) is among the highest from all survey groups.

Harassment and hate crime

Among all surveyed groups, Irish Travellers (52%) have the third highest rate of **hate-motivated harassment** (such as offensive comments on the street or online) but are relatively less likely (7%) to be physically attacked.

On **ethnic profiling** during police stops, 14% believe that the most recent stop was because they are a Traveller. This is the third highest rate compared to the other countries.

Their **trust in the police** in Ireland is the second lowest compared to other countries. Trust in the legal system is also the second lowest of all countries.

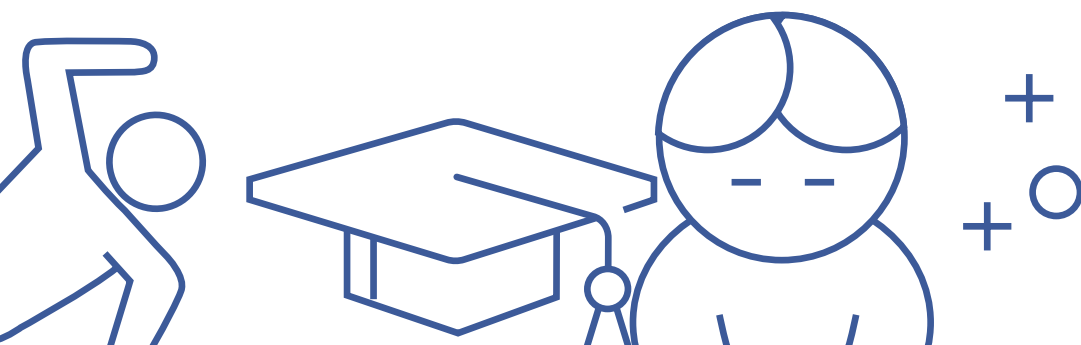
Education

Only 75% of Traveller children aged 4 or 5 are in **early childhood education** compared to almost all children generally in Ireland.

96% of Traveller children aged from 6 to 15, the statutory school leaving age in Ireland, are in school. 27% parents or guardians say their children are bullied in school because they are a Traveller.

70% of Travellers aged 18-24 years finished lower secondary education (the junior second level cycle up to junior certificate), and are **not in further education or training** compared to 5% of young Irish people generally.

Across all countries, 10% say the **hostile school environment or bullying** is the main reason for their children dropping out of school before the age of 15 and 5% of those aged 18-24 years for not continuing school. There is no data for just Ireland.



13% feel discriminated against because of being a Traveller when in contact with **school authorities** either as a parent/guardian or as a student.

In general, the share of Travellers who have not finished any formal education decreases with age. This is also true of literacy.

“I am a young 16-year-old girl just about to finish sixth year of secondary school and I am really worried that I will not get a chance in life because I am a Traveller.”

(Ireland, woman, 16, Traveller)

Employment

Compared to groups in other countries, Irish Travellers are the least likely to have **paid work**. 17% of Traveller women and 13% of Traveller men have paid jobs compared to 68% of Irish women and 80% of men generally.

Most only have **part-time jobs** (58%) and only 38% work **full-time**. Only 26% have a **permanent contract**.

70% of young Travellers (aged 16-24) are not **in employment, education or training**, the highest of all groups across the six countries. This is almost seven times more than young Irish people generally (11%).

38% felt **discriminated against when looking for work**, again the highest of all groups.

Only Roma and Travellers and Sinti in the Netherlands feel more excluded from society than Travellers in Ireland do.

63% of Irish Travellers do not have a **bank account** compared to 6% of people in Ireland generally. This is the highest among all survey groups.

Health and healthcare

More Irish Travellers have (**severe**) **limitations** due to health problems (29%) than people generally in Ireland (17%). This affects men (36%) more than women (23%).

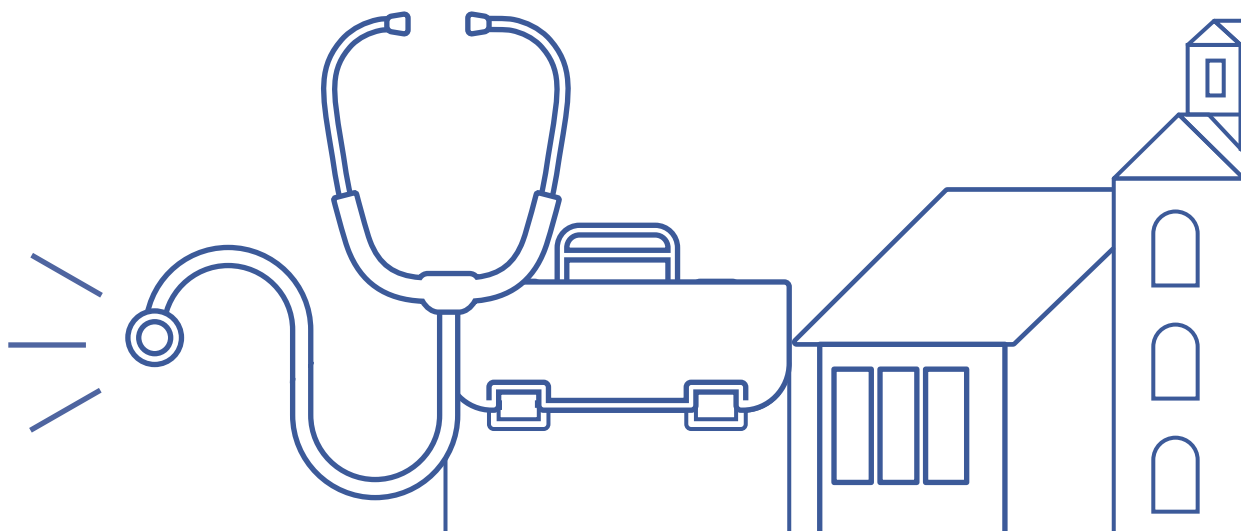
Travellers tend to live 8 years shorter than people do generally in Ireland. The **life expectancy** of men in Ireland is 79.7 years and for women 83.4. For Traveller men it is 71.3 years and for women 75.2.

88% have **medical cards**. Eligibility is means tested in Ireland.

In the year before the survey, 11% of Travellers report feeling discrimination in **healthcare**. This is the third highest rate compared to groups in other countries.

“The dampness is my children’s rooms is not healthy for my boys who suffer from asthma.”

(Ireland, woman, 35, Traveller)



Poverty and social exclusion

In Ireland, 10% of Travellers indicated that in the month before the survey someone in their household went **to bed hungry** at least once.

40% live in households that have (great) difficulties to **make ends meet**. This is among the highest of all survey groups and considerably higher than for people generally in Ireland (8%).

28% of Traveller **children** in Ireland grow up in **severe material deprivation**. 31% of Travellers live in households that cannot pay for basic items. These include unexpected expenses, one weekly holiday a year, a nutritious meal, adequate heating, a washing machine, TV, telephone or car, regular payments such as mortgage, rent, or utility bills.

Across all countries, 13% of Roma and Travellers live in **accommodation** with a leaking roof or damp walls or rotting window frames or floors. For Irish Travellers it is 25%.

Access to accommodation

Most Irish Travellers (92%) feel that there are **not enough places** – especially Traveller specific accommodation – for them to live.

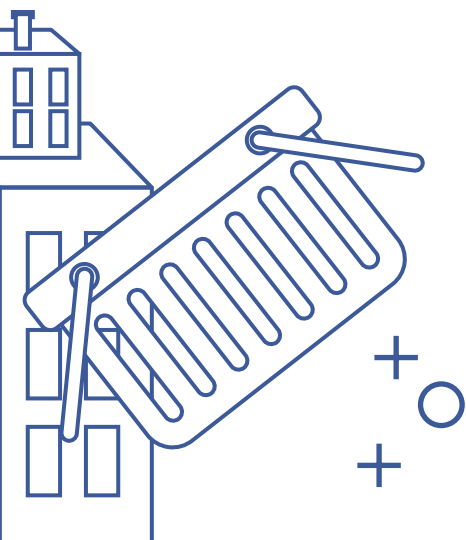
73% indicate the second highest rate of **discrimination when trying to rent or buy houses** in the last five years.

24% of Travellers face **severe housing deprivation**, the second highest after Travellers in France and 30 times more than people generally in Ireland (0.8%).

22% point to **crime, violence and vandalism** in their neighbourhood, and 20% mention too much **noise** from neighbours/ from outside.

“Nothing is being done for travelling people who want to continue to live a traditional life on a halting site or a Traveller specific group housing scheme.”

(Ireland, man, 52, Traveller)



Who did the survey cover?

In Ireland, the survey covered only Travellers (people who self-identified as such). It was the first time that FRA directly surveyed Travellers in Ireland. Roma were not included in this survey as the size of the Roma population in Ireland was too small to protect anonymity.

Travellers

Experts estimate there are about 40,000 Travellers in the Republic of Ireland. The State formally recognised Traveller ethnicity in 2017, although Irish Travellers have been part of Irish society for centuries. Travellers have a long-shared history, traditions, language, culture and customs. While their heritage is nomadic, most now live in permanent locations (either in houses or in trailers) and most, for a variety of reasons, are not nomadic. However, there are seasonal variations to this, and many may travel during the summer.

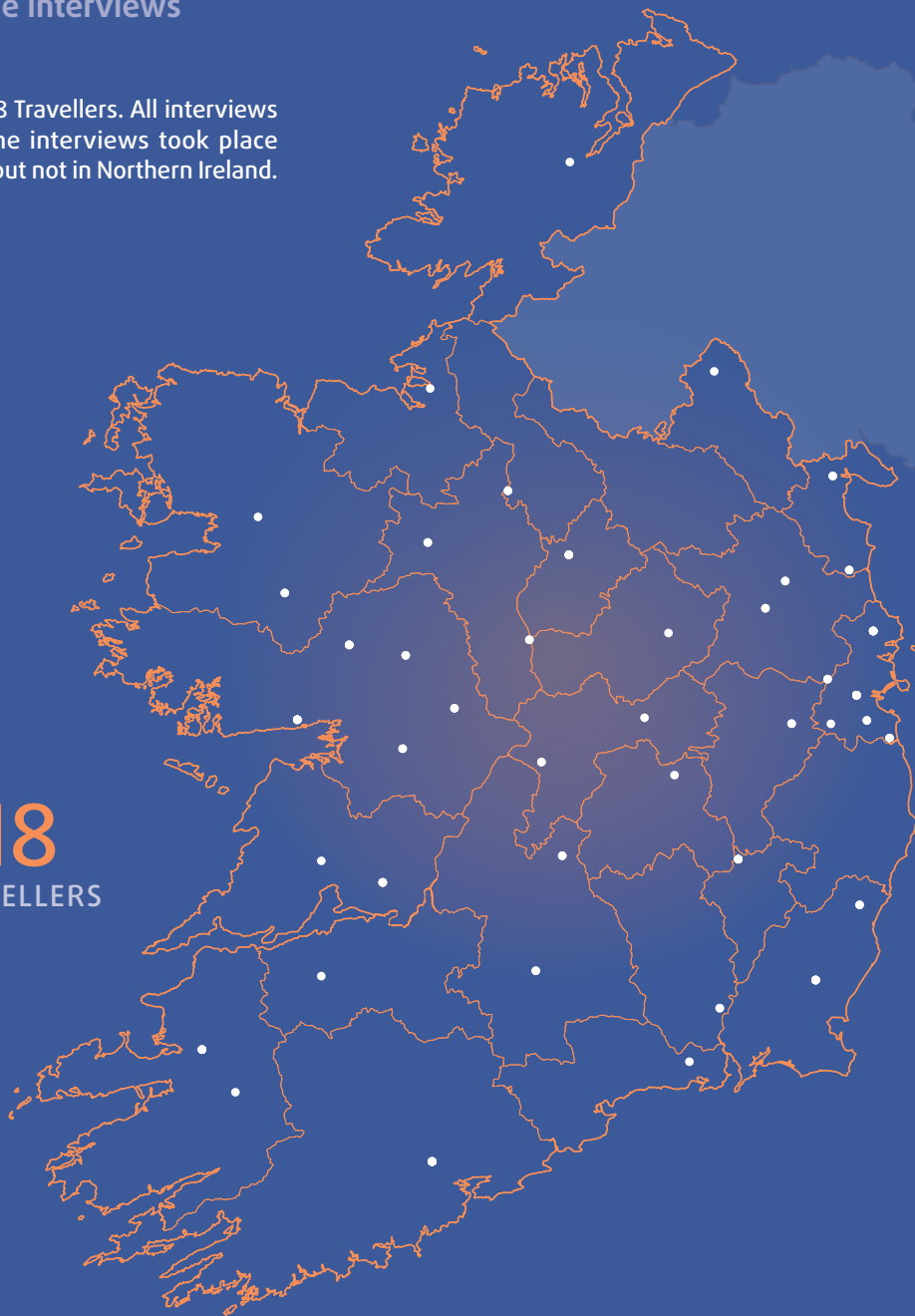


Where were the interviews conducted?

FRA interviewed 518 Travellers. All interviews were in English. The interviews took place throughout Ireland but not in Northern Ireland. (see map).



518
TRAVELLERS



Who conducted the interviews?

In Ireland, Travellers and some non-Travellers did the interviews. Having Travellers as interviewers helped gain access to sites and built trust with respondents more quickly than with non-Traveller interviewers. Sometimes community workers or primary healthcare workers from the Traveller community introduced or accompanied non-Traveller interviewers. They identified Traveller families to interview, recruited respondents and helped interviewers gain access to the sites. Traveller organisations supported the preparation and running of the survey in Ireland, not just the interviewing. Without their help, the survey would not have been possible. This survey is not about Travellers, it was research developed and conducted together with Traveller communities.



FRA – EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Schwarzenbergplatz 11 – 1040 Vienna – Austria
T +43 158030-0 – F +43 158030-699

fra.europa.eu

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