

# Public consultation on the development of a national model of parenting support services

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.



**An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige**  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth

## Introduction

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A collaborative working group set up by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is currently developing a draft national model of parenting support services.

As part of this work the group would like to hear your thoughts and ideas on the questions below.

Please note this survey will open to submissions until **April 16th**.

### Consultation Scope

The aim of this consultation is to gather your thoughts and ideas on improving the development and delivery of parenting support services for all parents. Parenting support is the provision of information and services aimed at strengthening parents' knowledge, confidence and skills to help achieve the best outcomes for children and their families.

Parenting supports include parenting programmes, information sessions, one-to-one advice and support, group-based supports, parent mentoring, home visiting programmes, drop-in advice clinics, support helplines, online parenting supports and books and leaflets

Please note that wider family focused policies and supports such as financial supports, educational supports, housing, mental health services and children's services are outside the scope of this consultation.

## Questionnaire

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\* 1(a). I am responding as a

- Parent
- Person who works with parents
- Member of the public
- Other (e.g. on behalf of an organisation)

1(b). If other, please specify

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre

2. How can we ensure that all parents, regardless of where in Ireland they live, can access effective parenting supports when they need them?

*1500 character(s) maximum*

- Make parenting supports universal and targeted in line with commitments in First 5.
- Investment is needed to address digital literacy and digital poverty among marginalised groups. Online information and supports are being missed out on by Traveller and Roma parents who do not have access to technology or familiarity with navigating online sites.
- All LA halting sites and group housing schemes should include provision of WIFI as part of core infrastructure.
- Resource Traveller and Roma orgs to work in partnership with families and the State on culturally appropriate supports.
- To ensure Roma parents have equal access, develop materials considering language and literacy, and have interpreters available for all in-person services and helplines.
- Ensure that accessing supports/programming is not dependent on a fixed, permanent address which excludes Travellers and Roma who are experiencing homelessness or living with friends and family without proof of address.
- Many Roma are unable to obtain their social protections and supports as they are unable to establish their right to reside in the state, or meet the Habitual Residence Condition. Roma cite issues such as a lack of documentation on tenancy and employment history, inability to understand and negotiate an unfamiliar system, and language and literacy barriers as being key obstacles. 84.4% of Roma reported feeling discriminated against in getting social welfare, regardless of the success of their application.

3. What needs to be considered when deciding what new or existing parenting to fund or provide?

*1500 character(s) maximum*

● The daily lived realities of Travellers and Roma, including dealing with racism, discrimination, high unemployment, poor mental health, overcrowded and unsafe accommodation, and in some cases, lack of access to running water, electricity and heating. Both communities have lower levels of literacy and educational attainment, and less access to digital devices and the internet. It can be extremely hard to parent and nurture your children when faced with such circumstances, all out of your control. While addressing poverty and the social determinants of health is beyond the remit of this consultation, the lived realities of Travellers and Roma must be acknowledged and considered in the design and delivery of parenting supports.

● Some Roma families, oftentimes those most in need within our society, are receiving no state support. 49.2% of Roma households with children were unsuccessful in their application for social protection payments, and therefore are not receiving Child Benefit.

● A mainstreaming approach alone won't work. There is a need for targeted/special measures, including, for example, funding of Traveller education workers.

● Is it culturally appropriate? Have the needs of Travellers and Roma been considered in the design and implementation of the programme? Are Traveller and Roma organisations with expertise in this area involved? Has a community development approach been used?

#### 4. How can we raise awareness of the existing parenting support services and their benefits for parents and their children, both at a national and local level?

*1500 character(s) maximum*

● Use the existing Traveller health infrastructure. The All Ireland Traveller Health Study reported that 83% of Travellers received health information from Primary Healthcare for Travellers Projects (PHCTPs) and Traveller organisations. More recently, in its National COVID-19 Traveller Service User Experience Survey, published in October 2020, the HSE found that 'respondent's most frequent access to information on COVID-19 was via a local Traveller project (73%)'. Traveller Community Health Workers often have decades of experience in signposting families to available supports. They know the families who may want or need to access parenting support services and can get the right information to them - if they have it.

● For Roma parents, there is a lack of awareness and information about services, due partly to the lack of confidence and trust in institutions and authorities, and partly due to language and literacy difficulties. To reach Roma parents, ensure all information is translated and available in accessible formats, considering literacy and language barriers.

● Produce and share physical material (e.g. pamphlets, posters, etc.), radio PSAs, and videos.

● Ensure that national and local agencies proactively include Travellers and Roma from the outset.

#### 5. How can barriers to accessing parenting supports be reduced?

*1500 character(s) maximum*

- Implementation of the Public Sector Duty, as per Section 42, IHREC Act 2014, to ensure equality of access, participation and outcome in terms of supports.
- Mandatory anti-racism and discrimination training for all staff delivering parenting supports.
- The collection and use of ethnic data (ethnic equality monitoring) within a human rights framework is necessary to combat racism, eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights. Ethnic equality monitoring is government policy and a number of public bodies routinely collect and use ethnic data to inform policy and practice.
- Ensure there are dedicated personnel and resources for Traveller and Roma organisations as well as Traveller and Roma-specific parenting programmes.
- Use the PHCTPs, and Traveller and Roma orgs, to share information on what supports are available.
- Ensure universal access to parenting supports - special measures are required to address gaps in mainstreaming.
- Ensure publications and places are inclusive for Travellers and Roma. This includes having images of Travellers and Roma in pamphlets, booklets, and campaign material as well as in any physical spaces where services are offered. Traveller and Roma parents and children should see themselves reflected in the spaces they visit and in government publications. This is one small but significant action that can be taken whereby Travellers and Roma will feel that the information and place is also for them.

## 6. What parenting support services do you think should be prioritised and why?

*1500 character(s) maximum*

- Establish a strong national Roma infrastructure to strategically respond to the needs of the Roma community in Ireland during and after the COVID-19 crisis. This would involve the roll-out of dedicated health and social supports for Roma, including dedicated Health Workers for Roma, who can share information with Roma families, and support them in accessing services.
- Further development of Traveller infrastructure, especially in areas where there is a significant Traveller population. This includes resourcing of Traveller Primary Healthcare Projects and the forthcoming National Traveller Health Action Plan to deliver and implement Traveller health policy. There have been no new resources for Traveller health since 2008.
- Any committee set up by the forthcoming Parenting Unit needs to include Traveller and Roma representatives.
- Share information through Public Health Nurses, Traveller and Roma health infrastructure/organisations, and County Childcare Committees on how parents can access early intervention services such as speech, language and occupational therapy. Currently, how to access needed early intervention services is unclear.
- Parenting programming created or adapted, and delivered, by Travellers and Roma. Travellers and Roma, and representative organisations, know best what challenges parents face and what supports are needed most.

## Contact

[Contact Form](#)

