



**PAVEE POINT**  
TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE

**Note on the National Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES) 2024-2030 and  
the TRES Plan for Implementation and Action 2024-2026**

**December 2025**

## **Introduction**

The Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES) is a Government strategy aimed at addressing educational disadvantage and inequality experienced by Traveller and Roma children and young people across the entire education continuum, from early years through to further and higher education.<sup>1</sup> TRES seeks to ensure that Traveller and Roma learners have equitable access, meaningful participation, and positive outcomes in education, while also ensuring that Traveller and Roma cultures and identities are recognised, respected, and valued within the education system.

This long-sought education strategy and action plan (2024-2026)<sup>2</sup> followed a national consultative process with all stakeholders, and in particular with Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma. While school education at first and second levels are core to TRES, it correctly includes Early Years and Higher and Further Education, working in collaboration with the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE), and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), and intersecting with the Early Start Programme (DEY) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) *National Access Plan*.

The purpose of this note is to provide a brief update on the implementation of TRES and associated actions 2024-2026, as we approach the end of the first two-year implementation phase. This might support the development of views and perspectives on progress of actions to date, and which actions need to take priority in the next action plan 2026-2028.

## **Early Years**

### **Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE)**

The core early-year initiatives aim to bring about equal participation of Traveller and Roma children in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), practitioner capability, and cultural inclusion. While there are separate initiatives such as *Shaping the Future: Early Years Action Plan Phase 1 Report*<sup>3</sup> and *'Simplify and Support: Action Plan for Simplification'*,<sup>4</sup> they are linked to the TRES.

The Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES) recognises that disadvantage in early life can have long-term impacts on children's development, life chances, and social inclusion. Within the early years pillar, the strategy prioritises equal participation in early learning, particularly through the Equal Start model.<sup>5</sup> This includes creating culturally inclusive environments, providing diversity training for educators, and enhancing family supports to address barriers to participation. A central objective remains achieving equitable participation of Traveller and Roma children in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/traveller-and-roma-education-strategy-2024-2030.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/traveller-and-roma-education,-strategy-2024-2026.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children-disability-and-equality/publications/shaping-the-future/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/5ff2aa96/Simplify\\_and\\_Support-Action\\_Plan\\_for\\_Simplification\\_WEB.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/5ff2aa96/Simplify_and_Support-Action_Plan_for_Simplification_WEB.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children-disability-and-equality/publications/equal-start/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children-disability-and-equality/publications/early-childhood-care-and-education-programme-ecce/>

## Progress to date

Foundational progress has been made in advancing key early years actions. Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) guidelines, resources, and training are currently in development. Updated DEI guidelines are scheduled for publication in February 2026, with accompanying training to be rolled out to Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School-Aged Childcare (SAC) staff throughout 2026.

The establishment of key roles to strengthen links between Traveller and Roma families and ELC settings has been particularly welcomed. This includes the appointment of two Early Years Specialists and six Family Link Workers to support the full rollout of the Traveller Parenting Support Programme across 17 Tusla areas. In addition, the Equal Start Model and Identification Model have been implemented and are now being used to identify services that require additional resourcing and funding, a critical step in supporting the effective delivery of the strategy.

To support accountability and consistency, the development of an Equal Start monitoring and evaluation framework is underway and is expected to be published in early 2026.

## Areas of concern

Despite progress, several key actions require further attention. A robust approach to disaggregated data for ethnic equality monitoring is urgently needed to accurately track Traveller and Roma children's participation in the ECCE programme and to report meaningfully on trends. Progress is also needed on inclusive admissions policies and the introduction of regulatory requirements for ELC and SAC services to ensure equitable access. Pavee Point recognises the complexity of this work and welcomes the Department's commitment to commissioning research to inform next steps.

Transition points within the education system remain critical for sustaining participation, and the lack of progress on developing a national model of transitions is a concern. In addition, a stronger emphasis is needed on the action "partnership with parents," which is essential for supporting families' continued engagement with early years education. Associated actions to develop and maintain links with Travellers organisations and groups working with Roma are also required.

## **Primary and Post-Primary Education**

### **Department of Education and Youth (DEY)**

Following the OECD review of school resourcing to address educational disadvantage<sup>7</sup>, a new DEIS strategy, including the DEIS Plus scheme, is due to be published in early 2026. This strategy reaffirms the Government's commitment to addressing the needs of schools experiencing the highest levels of disadvantage. Identification of DEIS Plus schools will be evidence-informed and will prioritise schools with the highest concentrations of disadvantage, including those with significant populations of Traveller and Roma children and young people. This targeted approach should strengthen inclusion and wellbeing, as well as support and improve educational outcomes for Traveller and Roma children and young people.

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<sup>7</sup>[https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-review-of-resourcing-schools-to-address-educational-disadvantage-in-ireland\\_3433784c-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-review-of-resourcing-schools-to-address-educational-disadvantage-in-ireland_3433784c-en.html)

In Budget 2026, €16 million was secured for implementation of the new DEIS strategy, rising to €40 million in 2027.<sup>8</sup>

### Progress to date

A National Manager and two National TRES Coordinators have been appointed. The TRES Coordinators are leading the implementation of selected actions and are currently undertaking a national scoping and mapping exercise of Traveller and Roma education initiatives outside those funded by the Department of Education. Although this work is overdue, there is a commitment to complete it by mid-2026.

Progress is ongoing in the recruitment of 20 Community Link Workers (CLWs), who work in partnership with schools and Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) in areas with high numbers of Traveller, Roma, migrant, and other disadvantaged students. Recruitment has proven challenging; however, by year-end 2025, CLWs have been recruited or are in the onboarding process in 14 of the 16 areas. These roles aim to support and improve the school attendance, participation, and retention of Traveller and Roma children and young people throughout the education system.

Work is progressing on updating and publishing intercultural guidelines for schools, with a specific focus on Traveller and Roma children and young people. The Teaching Council has completed a report on standards, quality, and good practice in Initial Teacher Education (ITE); however, further progress is required to advance the recommended actions and ensure that schools create the conditions necessary for the inclusion and participation of Traveller and Roma children and young people in school.

Additional progress includes the launch of a STAR initiatives webpage, development of digital resource packs for schools, a review of homework clubs, and ongoing development of a role-model and mentoring programme for Traveller and Roma children and young people. Wellbeing inspection guidance has been launched, and the NCCA has produced a Traveller culture video as an additional school resource.<sup>9</sup> Oide, a support service for teachers and school leaders, funded by the Department of Education, is also developing a cultural awareness course for teachers.

It needs, however, to include a clear focus on racism and addressing racism in particular in regard to Traveller and Roma racism. This is an important action as teachers should be trained and equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to create school environments that are reflective of the diverse student body and inclusive of all.

Under TRES, the Inspectorate plays an important role in evaluating the system quality and effectiveness and ensures representation of schools with high numbers of Traveller and Roma students, with inspection findings informing evaluation of TRES actions.<sup>10</sup> DEY and TESS have also progressed the five-year attendance improvement plan, with Phase One launched in October.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup><https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/press-releases/ministers-mcentee-and-moynihan-announce-details-of-131-billion-education-and-youth-funding-in-budget-2026/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://ncca.ie/en/updates-and-events/latest-news/2025/july/short-film-traveller-culture-and-history/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/inspection-reports/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/campaigns/school-attendance/>

## Areas of concern

Concerns remain regarding support for Traveller and Roma students in non-DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) schools and those not in schools with the highest levels of educational disadvantage (DEIS Plus). Initial Teacher Education continues to require focused attention, particularly in relation to addressing racism and discrimination and fostering inclusive education environments.

Delays in recruiting Community Link Workers have slowed the implementation of this pilot. It is essential that all CLWs receive anti-racism training, which Pavee Point will support the provision of anti-racism training in early 2026. Robust data collection systems and the timely publication of disaggregated data on attendance, retention, suspensions, and expulsions remain critical gaps.

## **Further and Higher Education**

### Progress to date

Some progress has been made in exploring the simplification of the Common Learner Details Form<sup>12</sup> and adapting it for adult literacy and community education programmes. Higher education institutions have continued to strengthen their focus on inclusion, equity, and diversity, supporting the provision of anti-racism education and training.

Literacy and numeracy supports have expanded, including culturally appropriate language and literacy programmes for Roma parents delivered through ETBs (Education and Training Boards). Traveller and Roma communities continue to be prioritised under the Adult Literacy for Life strategy, with strengthened family literacy supports.<sup>13</sup>

The initiatives under The Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) have offered, and in associated areas have given direct support for Travellers and Roma.<sup>14</sup> The National Access Plan, A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028 (NAP) is the key instrument for higher education.<sup>15</sup> The inclusion of Travellers in the past two plans and the inclusion of Roma in the current one have been key to gaining support for them, including through all PATH initiatives.

In addition, the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) particularly prioritises Traveller and Roma students.<sup>16</sup> The National Access Plan is the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) Higher Education Authority's standalone strategy, with a national

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.plss.ie/cdn/forms/learnerdetails/en/learnerdetailsform.tippetb.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-further-and-higher-education-research-innovation-and-science/publications/adult-literacy-for-life-a-10-year-adult-literacy-strategy>

<sup>14</sup> <https://hea.ie/policy/access-policy/path/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2024/07/National-Access-Plan-2022-2028-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/third-level-education/applying-to-college/third-level-admissions-scheme-for-students-from-disadvantaged-backgrounds/>

steering committee overseeing its implementation. A mid-way review of the strategy is currently underway and will inform actions up to its end in 2028.

Traveller incentivisation led by the Irish Traveller Movement continues.

### **Areas of concern**

Further progress is required in developing adequate and appropriate supports for Traveller and Roma women to access tertiary education. To address this, DFHERIS and DCDE are undertaking research on barriers and enablers to participation. Progress on transition supports from further to higher education has also been limited, with the Department now exploring the potential introduction of a transition coordinator role.

### **Concluding remarks**

TRES has begun to establish the necessary structures, roles, and policy frameworks to advance educational equity for Traveller and Roma communities. However, progress remains uneven, with implementation still at an early or foundational stage in many areas.

Common challenges, including inadequate data collection, weak transition supports, and delays in operationalising key actions, continue to limit impact. Addressing these issues will be critical to ensuring that commitments translate into measurable improvements in access, participation, and outcomes.

Pavee Point acknowledges the need for the next action plan (2026-2028) to consolidate the actions set out in TRES and remains committed to supporting the full implementation of TRES and to working collaboratively with government departments, education providers, families, and communities to realise the strategy's overarching goal: ensuring meaningful participation, equity of opportunity, and positive educational outcomes for all Traveller and Roma learners within an inclusive system that respects and values their cultures and identities.