



PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE

Report on 'TRES: From Plan to Action'

Pavee Point Education Event
Priority Actions for the Implementation
of the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy
Second Action Plan 2026-2028

September 2026



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Priority Actions for the Implementation of the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy
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Prepared by

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Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre is a national Traveller and Roma organisation committed to the attainment of human rights for Irish Travellers and Roma through a community development approach. Pavee Point combines local action with national policy and participation work to address the structural inequalities and discrimination experienced by Travellers and Roma across a range of areas, including education. With longstanding expertise in working to promote Travellers' and Roma rights to education and has a longstanding track record in this area, grounded in direct engagement with communities and informed by policy and advocacy work at local and national level.

On 8th September 2026, Pavee Point hosted an education event, bringing together Travellers, Roma, Traveller organisations, groups working with Roma, Government Departments and agencies involved in the implementation of the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES), as well as other education and community stakeholders.

Department and agency leads identified the immediate priorities and actions set out in the second TRES Action Plan 2026-2028 that they will focus on, providing the important opportunity to consider and discuss what is needed to move from commitments on paper to meaningful change in the experiences and outcomes of Traveller and Roma children, young people and adults across the education system.

Four workshops focused on:

1. Early Years
2. Primary and Post-Primary Education
3. Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) actions
4. Further and Higher Education

Across these workshops, participants identified several positive areas of the action plan that are working well. The plan's commitment to improving access and participation at Early Years was noted, alongside its commitment to directly involving Travellers and Roma in the development and delivery of actions across the education continuum. The whole-school approach taken by the action plan aligns with comments and observations made by participants throughout the workshops, and increasing anti-racism training for all school personnel was noted as an important action.



The discussions across the four workshops identified six overarching priorities that participants considered essential to the effective implementation of the second Traveller and Roma Education Strategy Action Plan 2026-2028. While the issues and proposed responses differ across the education continuum, there was strong consistency around the need for meaningful Traveller and Roma participation, stronger action on racism and cultural inclusion, improved access and outcomes, better coordination, and stronger monitoring and accountability.

The priorities below bring together the common themes and recommendations emerging from the event.

Summary of Priority Actions:

1. Direct Traveller and Roma participation and representation

Build Traveller and Roma participation into the design, delivery and monitoring of education policies, resources and supports, and increase Traveller and Roma representation across education and support roles.

2. Tackling anti-Traveller and anti-Roma racism and strengthening interculturalism and inclusion

Develop an anti-racism training programme available to all school personnel across the education continuum, including through Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Professional Learning and Education (PLE), with Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma directly involved, and appropriately resourced, to co-develop and deliver training and resources.

3. Improving access, engagement and transitions

Identify and address barriers for Travellers and Roma accessing early learning, school, FET and HE, including transport, geographical barriers, admissions, information gaps and costs, while strengthening targeted support at key transition points.

4. Improving attendance, retention, progression and outcomes

Implement actions to improve attendance, participation, retention and progression, with particular attention to strengthening measures on RSDs, early school leaving and transitions and progression to FET and HE.

5. Strengthening coordination, targeted provision and accountability

Improve coordination between Departments, education services, Traveller organisations, groups working with Roma and community-based workers; map gaps in provision, prevent overlapping roles and target resources to areas and communities where needs are greatest.



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6. Better data, monitoring and implementation

Establish clear implementation measures and accountability mechanisms, with a focus on strengthening the collection of ethnicity data (in line with a Human Rights based approach), monitoring and reporting, and ensure the action plan is regularly reviewed with Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma.



Early Years

The Early Years workshop highlighted that barriers to participation begin before children enter primary school. Participants discussed challenges experienced by Traveller and Roma families in accessing childcare places, navigating admissions processes and obtaining information about available supports.



Communication between services and families was identified as an important area for improvement, particularly where families may be unfamiliar with the systems and processes involved.

Trust and cultural awareness were recurring themes. Participants identified a core weakness in voluntary DEI training, in that it may not reach the providers who are in most need of it, and highlighted the critical importance of Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma being directly involved in the development and delivery of training.

The discussion also emphasised the need for culturally appropriate Traveller and Roma resources within early learning. Resources should be developed with Travellers and Roma and should be mainstreamed into early learning for all students to engage with, rather than being treated as a separate, tokenistic addition.

Greater diversity within the early years workforce was also identified as an important longer-term priority, including creating programmes to support people from Traveller and Roma backgrounds to train for and access careers in early learning and childcare and school age childcare.

Participants in rural areas additionally identified transport as a major barrier to accessing ELC, alongside continued difficulties in accessing childcare places and appropriate provision for children with additional needs.



Key Priority Actions:

- **DEI training for early years providers**

Increase uptake of training and consider whether stronger requirements, including mandatory training or links to ECCE funding, are needed to ensure meaningful participation.

- **Improve access to early learning and childcare for Traveller and Roma families**

Address barriers already identified relating to admissions, information, transport, geography and access to appropriate provision, including for children with additional needs. Provide clear, accessible information through trusted Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma.

- **Develop culturally appropriate Traveller and Roma resources**

Ensure resources are developed with Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma and are integrated into wider early learning and whole-school resources rather than being tokenistic or isolated.



Primary and Post-Primary



The Primary and Post-Primary workshop identified racism, attendance, participation, retention and progression as key areas requiring continued attention. Participants strongly supported increased Traveller and Roma anti-racism training for all teachers and school staff. At the same time, questions were raised surrounding how mandatory training could be implemented effectively to best support Traveller and Roma

participation and progression in education. There was particular emphasis on ensuring Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma are directly involved in delivering training, which is standard in other sectors, e.g. health, and that school leadership and Boards of Management are included in receiving this training, given their influence on whole-school culture.

There were significant concerns around attendance and school completion in terms of reduced school days (RSDs), suspensions and expulsions, including the need for accurate monitoring and stronger accountability. The discussion raised concerns about the potential for Traveller and Roma students to be disproportionately and unduly placed on RSDs and the implications this has for participation and educational outcomes. An 'Attendance Support Plan' was identified as an immediate priority.

Transition points were also identified as particularly important, with stronger supports needed to support retention and progression. Participants emphasised that Traveller and Roma inclusion needs to be understood and undertaken as the responsibility of the whole school rather than being confined to a particular individual or role - as such, concerns were raised around the proposal of 'champions' and 'ambassadors'.

The discussion also highlighted the need for better ethnicity data, effective monitoring of Traveller and Roma-specific education funding, improved transport availability, particularly in rural areas, and



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more consistent and meaningful implementation of Traveller and Roma culture and history across the whole curriculum. While resources and guidance already exist, participants noted that implementation is inconsistent and can be dependent on individual schools or teachers. This indicates a need to standardise implementation across all schools.

Key Priority Actions:

- **Address attendance and RSDs as an urgent priority**

Improve monitoring of RSDs, suspensions and expulsions and implement a robust Tusla Attendance Support Plan where necessary. Strengthen accountability mechanisms around reporting of RSDs.

- **Strengthen anti-racism, interculturalism and inclusion across schools**

Ensure training reaches teachers, school staff, school leadership and Boards of Management, with Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma involved in its design and delivery. More broadly, consider how anti-racism can be strengthened within teacher education.

- **Strengthen Ethnic Equality Monitoring (EEM) and use of ethnicity data.**

Progress commitment to rollout EEM and ensure data is used to identify need, monitor outcomes and inform resource allocation.



Further and Higher Education

The Further and Higher Education workshop identified a range of practical, structural and attitudinal barriers affecting Traveller and Roma participation in further and higher education.

Transition from school was identified as an important area for intervention, with participants calling for stronger pathways and supports to help Traveller and Roma students progress into further and higher education.



There was also a strong emphasis on the need for more local and hybrid education options, particularly for people in rural areas where geographical and transport barriers can make participation difficult.

Apprenticeships emerged as a particular concern. Participants reported concerns about Traveller apprentices being placed in lower-level work, not receiving meaningful learning opportunities and subsequently being let go during the first year. This highlighted the need for stronger accountability mechanisms for employers, alongside measures to address workplace attitudes and discrimination. Anti-racism training for ETB staff and registered employers was proposed, alongside consideration of incentives for employers to recruit Travellers and Roma.

Other barriers identified included transport, student accommodation, exorbitant upfront costs, caring responsibilities and gaps in access to information about available supports. Participants also highlighted potential gaps for students who do not access HEAR supports, indicating a need to consider the full range of supports required to enable Travellers and Roma to enter and remain in further and higher education.



Key Priority Actions:

- **Strengthen pathways and access into FET and HE**

Develop targeted transition supports from school into further and higher education, alongside more local, flexible and hybrid options to address geographical and transport barriers, particularly in rural areas.

- **Address the practical and financial barriers to participation and progression**

Improve access to clear information and appropriate financial and student supports, while addressing barriers including transport, accommodation, upfront costs and caring responsibilities. Review gaps in existing supports, including for students who do not access HEAR, to ensure Travellers and Roma are supported to enter, remain in and progress through FET and HE.

- **Strengthen equality, quality and accountability in education provision and apprenticeships**

Ensure Travellers and Roma receive meaningful learning and progression opportunities, with stronger accountability for employers and providers to address racism, workplace attitudes and unequal experiences. Deliver anti-racism training through FET and HE and consider incentives to support the recruitment and retention of Traveller apprentices.



Tusla Education Support Service (TESS)



The TESS workshop focused on the continued importance of supporting Traveller and Roma attendance, participation, retention and progression. Participants welcomed the potential contribution of Community Link Workers (CLWs), while emphasising that their role needs to be clearly defined in relation to existing Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma's education programmes and workers. This is to ensure added value.

There was particular concern about duplication of roles and the need to ensure that new provision complements rather than replaces or duplicates existing community-based expertise. Participants supported expanding CLWs where there are identified gaps, particularly in rural areas and areas with a significant Roma population.

The mapping of Traveller and Roma education supports was welcomed, but participants stressed that mapping needs to identify gaps both between counties and within counties to best target and implement supports at the local level based on local needs. Better ethnicity data was also identified as necessary to inform resource allocation.

The workshop highlighted the importance of collaboration between CLWs, Family Link Workers, schools, Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma and other services. Clear and accessible information and resources for schools, parents and young people were also identified as a significant ongoing priority.



Key Priority Actions:

- **Clarify and evaluate the Community Link Worker role**

Evaluate the CLW model, including its relationship with existing Traveller and Roma education workers and community organisations and groups, to ensure roles are complementary and do not duplicate existing provision and provide added value, rather than an add-on. Prioritise expansion in rural areas and communities where there is insufficient provision, including areas with significant Roma populations.

- **Strengthen targeted support for Traveller and Roma pupils at key points of the education journey**

Maintain a strong focus on attendance, participation, retention and progression, with targeted supports at key transition points, particularly primary to post-primary, and clear actionable responses to issues such as reduced school days.

- **Improve data, monitoring and inter-agency collaboration**

Strengthen the collection, analysis and use of ethnicity data, monitoring and accountability within TESS, and improve collaboration between CLWs, Family Link Workers, schools, Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma and other relevant services to ensure gaps and emerging issues are identified and addressed.



Conclusion



The discussions across the four workshops demonstrated a strong level of consensus about what is needed to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of Traveller and Roma children, young people and adults. While the barriers identified differ across the education continuum, they are interconnected and cannot be addressed through isolated actions or individual programmes. Access to education and educational outcomes are shaped by a combination of structural and institutional barriers, including racism, discriminatory practices, geographical and financial barriers, and the quality of engagement with Traveller and Roma families.

A clear message emerging from the event was that implementation must now be the priority. The second TRES Action Plan provides an important framework of commitments, but its impact will ultimately be measured by whether those commitments result in tangible changes in the experiences of Travellers and Roma in educational access, participation, retention, progression and outcomes. This requires more than the development of guidance, resources or initiatives. Actions need clear assigned responsibility, adequate and sustained resourcing, targets with measurable outcomes and timelines and mechanisms for monitoring progress and addressing gaps where implementation is not taking place.

The workshops also highlighted the importance of recognising and building on the expertise that



already exists among Travellers and Roma, as well as within Traveller organisations and groups working with Roma.

New initiatives and structures should complement, rather than duplicate or displace, existing community-based provision and knowledge. Meaningful participation must therefore extend beyond consultation to genuine involvement in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of actions. Increasing direct Traveller and Roma representation within education and support services is an important part of this.

The event further demonstrated that anti-racism and inclusion must not be treated as additional or optional measures, but as core elements of education policy and practice. Participants identified concerns about the inconsistent implementation of existing commitments and the limitations of approaches that rely solely on voluntary participation. Stronger expectations, leadership and accountability are required across schools, early years settings, FET and HE providers, and education support services.

Finally, the discussions reinforced the importance of better data and stronger monitoring. Reliable ethnicity data is essential to identify where inequalities persist, target resources effectively and assess whether interventions are making a difference. Ethnic identifier provides an important basis for understanding the experiences and outcomes of all students, including Traveller and Roma students. Monitoring must be accompanied by a willingness and commitment to act on what the data and the experiences of students, families and communities show.

The second TRES Action Plan presents an opportunity to build on existing work and address persistent inequalities across the education system. This stage must turn that opportunity into action. Departments and agencies should use the priorities identified through this event to establish clear implementation plans, identify the resources and responsibilities required, and put in place meaningful mechanisms for accountability and Traveller and Roma participation. Effective implementation is critical in translating policy commitment into measurable progress in access, participation and outcomes for Travellers and Roma in education.