

Summary

Including the missing voices of disabled people in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

About the DRILL Programme

DRILL (Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning) was an innovative 5 year, UK wide programme led by disabled people, for disabled people and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Launched in 2015, the programme was managed by a partnership of Disability Action Northern Ireland, Disability Rights UK, Disability Wales and Inclusion Scotland.

The aim of the programme was to build better evidence about approaches which enable disabled people to achieve independent living. The findings from the projects it funded can be used to inform future provision across a wide range of policy areas, and give a greater voice to disabled people in decisions which affect them.

This is one of a series of summaries of the project supported by DRILL. Final reports, toolkits and summaries of all the projects are available from the DRILL website at www.drilluk.org.uk.

Overview of the project

This project explored ways for the missing voices of disabled people in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to be heard and so improve services for this very marginalised group of disabled people.

Approach

The project developed an approach which incorporated the use of surveys, focus groups and individual interviews with over 150 people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities. .

A survey was also developed and sent out to disabled people's organisations across the UK, and a literature review was conducted.

There was a particular focus on using 'community connectors'; people with a GRT background or accepted by people from GRT communities to act as facilitators for the project.

Findings

There are around 300,000 people from GRT communities in the UK.

There are many sub-groups within the umbrella term of 'GRT communities' with their own language and cultures.

Many disabled people and their families are put off from accessing health and social care services because of general widespread discrimination.

Many people still think there is significant stigma around disability; this is particularly true in the case of men and poor mental health.

Statutory services make little attempt to engage with the GRT community, and are often reluctant to visit GRT sites.

Disabled people from GRT communities have very limited opportunities to be involved in service or policy development affecting disabled people.

Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations (DDPO's) have made limited efforts to engage with GRT communities.

Recommendations

The project outlined many recommendations, some of which are listed here. All recommendations are included in the full report, which is linked below.

- GRT organisations should invest in training to extend their expertise into the fields of disability and ensure that their ‘community connectors’ are conversant with the Equality Act, 2010 and include local disability organisations in their networking
- DDPOs should work with deaf and disabled people from GRT communities by making culturally sensitive adjustments to services
- Statutory organisations should be more proactive in their disabilities work with GRT communities, particularly in regard to preventive mental health interventions.

Final report

[Including the Missing Voices of Disabled people in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities](#)

Please click on report name to read the full report.

Project partners

**University of
Worcester**



**Shaping Our Lives
National User Network**

