

Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee

(LTACC)



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Traveller Culture & Heritage

Irish Travellers are a small indigenous ethnic minority group that has been part of Irish society for centuries. Travellers have a value system, language, customs and traditions that make them an identifiable group both to themselves and to others. Their distinctive lifestyle and culture, based on nomadic traditions, sets them apart from the general population.



After a long battle, Irish Travellers were finally officially recognised as an indigenous ethnic minority by Ireland's government in early March 2017.

Video

Travellers, their traditional nomadic life style and culture













Traveller children pictured at a site in Cabinteely in Dublin in 1997.
Image: RollingNews.ie via Eamonn Farrell

Dublin City Council Group Housing 2019









Population

802 Traveller family units accommodated in a range of accommodation types in Dublin City Council's functional area.

Accommodation Type	Number of families
Traveller Group Housing (including those sharing)	202
Traveller Halting Sites (including those sharing)	63
Standard housing (including those sharing)	335
Private Rented (including those sharing)	69
Voluntary Housing Associations	17
Unauthorised sites	116
Total	802
Homeless Emergency Accommodation	104

Source: Annual Traveller count Nov 2018

Questions?

A whistle stop tour of
policy & legislation

Report of the Commission on Itinerancy 1963

- First state policy on Travellers - policy for next 20 years. Terms of reference were to enquire into:
 - (1) problem arising from the presence in the country of itinerants in considerable numbers
 - (2) examine the economic, educational, health and social problems inherent in their way of life
 - (3) what steps might be taken (a) to provide opportunities for a better way of life (b) promote absorption into general community (c) pending such absorption to reduce to a minimum the disadvantage to themselves and to the community resulting from their itinerant habits

Legislation/Reports

- **1983 Travelling People Review Body Report** - approach was integration, acknowledged Travellers are separate group that experiences prejudice & hostility.
- **1988 Housing Act** – expenses for Social Workers, provision of sites for caravans & moveable dwellings (not tents).
- **1995 Task Force on Traveller Community** - Extensive consultation with Travellers & Traveller Organisations, commissioned research, highlighted discrimination on an individual & institutional level. Recommended provision of 3,100 units of accommodation.
- **1998 Traveller Accommodation Act** - obliged Local Authorities to produce 5 year plans and set up Local Traveller Consultative Committees (LTACC).
- **2000 & 2001 Equal Status Acts** - prohibits discrimination.
- **2002 Housing Act** – criminalised nomadism
- **2010 Our Geels All Ireland Traveller Health Study**

All Ireland Traveller Health Study – results for Travellers in comparison with general population

- Traveller mortality is 3.5 times higher.
- Life expectancy for Travellers is on average 13 years less.
- Infant mortality rate is almost 3.7 times higher.
- Suicide rate among Traveller men is 6.6 times higher and accounts for over 1 in 10 of Traveller deaths.

Also:

- revealed that 2,753 Traveller men, women & children did not have access to running water.
- acknowledges the broader structural inequalities and failure to address the social determinants of health (including poor accommodation conditions, poverty, illiteracy and discrimination).

Census 2016

3% of Travellers reached 65 years.

63% of Travellers are under 25 years (35% in general population).

13% complete Secondary education (92% in general population).

<1% go on to third level education.

80% of Travellers are unemployed.

Impact of policies

- Move from traditional nomadic lifestyle.
- No option to camp on roadside.
- Demise of traditional economic activity – tin smiths no longer required, no demand for copper pots, difficult to keep horses, traditional barrel wagons no longer in use, seasonal work on farms no longer available.
- High unemployment.
- Patriarchal structure in clans undermined by impact of drugs & breakdown in traditional values.
- Traditional ways of resolving feuds between clans restricted by lack of ability to move on.
- Severe lack of appropriate accommodation choices. Poor conditions for caravans on unauthorised sites.
- Common health hazards on unauthorised sites caused by burning rubber to get copper wiring, illegal dumping, rats, no individual connections to electricity & running water.
- Discrimination and exclusion.
- Historically, little provision on policy level to support culture & tradition.

Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998

Required setting up by Minister of a National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC) to

- (1) advise Minister in relation to any general matter concerning accommodation for Travellers.
- (2) advise in relation to the most appropriate means of improving , at local level, consultation with, and participation of, Travellers in the provision and management of accommodation.

Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998

- Local Authority to appoint Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC).
- advisory committee.
- Membership – (a) members of the Local Authority (City Councillors)
(b) officials of the Local Authority (2 Social workers, 2 administrators).
(c) representatives of local Travellers and Traveller bodies.

Structure

- Chair elected by Traveller Organisation and Traveller experts by experience from City Councillors or Traveller Reps. Currently has Independent Chairperson.
- Regular meetings planned at start of year.
- Meetings not held if Traveller representatives cannot attend.
- Terms of Reference agreed by all members.
- Agenda circulated ahead of meeting.
- Administrative support provided by Local Authority.
- Local Authority responsible for convening meetings.

LTACC formed to advise Dublin City Council in relation to:

- Provision of accommodation for Travellers.
- Preparation and implementation of the 5 year Traveller Accommodation Plan for the functional area of Dublin City Council.
- Overall management of accommodation for Travellers.
- Providing a mechanism for transparency and accountability for the delivery of Traveller specific culturally appropriate accommodation.

Purpose

- To drive Traveller accommodation policy.
- Not a forum to discuss day to day management or individual cases.
- Give Service Users a strong voice in matters that affect their lives and Local Authority the benefit of Service Users knowledge & expertise.

Role of expert by experience

- Influence Dublin City Council's policy, decisions and practices.
- Report back and inform own community.

Significant Issues

For both Local Authority and Travellers

Overcrowding & lack of appropriate accommodation choices



Illegal Dumping on sites



Illegal Dumping - roadside



Fire Risk



Feuds between families

- Serious injuries & intimidation.
- Loss of accommodation.
- Destruction of some halting sites & group housing schemes.
- Other families won't move into vacant accommodation caused through feuds.

Traditional (and current) Economic activity

- scrap dealing.
- Horses.
- Demand for space available on sites to accommodate these versus need to use available space for accommodation.

Lack of Basic Services

- Some unofficial halting sites on private land don't have adequate water supply or electricity.

Outcomes and Benefits

Outcomes and Benefits

- Accommodation needs assessment to inform 5 year plan is now carried out by Traveller Reps.
- Major electrical upgrades on halting site completed.
- Difficulties with implementation of Fire Safety negotiated with assistance of Traveller Reps/Traveller Groups.
- Some new build & refurbishment & special needs extensions completed.
- Back yard refurbishments, bathroom upgrades completed.
- Consultation with experts by experience changed some priorities and the nature of some projects.
- Temporary Halting site bays completed.
- 29 Sanitation Units purchased for sites with no services.
- All of above facilitated by agreeing priorities each year with Traveller reps with regard to how capital funding would be spent.
- Change from fixed rent Scheme to Differential Rent Scheme – transition only successful because of policy input and guidance from Traveller Reps. Their knowledge of how this would be received within their own community was key.
- Better relationships with Traveller community.

Outcomes and Benefits

- Channel for resolving differences of opinion and conflict between Service Users and Local Authority.
- Establishes experts by experience as equal partners in discussion - shift in perspective from beneficiaries to active participants in planning, delivery and implementation.
- Has established an official forum for all parties to discuss major concerns.
- Supported capacity building in the community by seeking to include experts by experience from all areas.
- Recognition and increased respect from all parties.
- Transparency and Accountability.
- Ethnicity recognised by City Council (in 2014) prior to National Recognition (2017).
- Committee extended to include a representative from the Housing Special Policy Committee (HSPC) to provide for a reporting mechanism to the HSPC.
- Number of meetings per annum increased to support a meaningful and regular contribution to policy.
- Financial Gain – supports better use of limited funding.

Outcomes and Benefits

- Learning
 - service user learns about technical/ financial difficulties/ administration processes/developing a community oriented perspective.
 - Local Authority learns what policies will be unpopular & reasons why. Also that Experts by experience have knowledge that can provide solutions leading to better decisions about resource allocation.

Outcomes - limitations

- Lot still to do –Traveller Accommodation Expert Review Group 2019 looked at effectiveness of the Housing (Travellers Accommodation) Act 1998 as a mechanism to meet Accommodation needs in the Traveller Community.
- Concluded that arrangements established under the Act have significant strengths and have enabled the delivery of significant amounts of accommodation for Travellers , but they have failed to meet the full scale of accommodation need among this community.
- Many external forces impact on how much can be achieved – such as procedures that slow down progress, legislation, commitment of officials assigned to support LTACC, inconsistent participation by experts by experience & City Councillors, inadequate funding.
- is advisory with no power to impose sanctions.

Challenges

Managing Expectations

High & unrealistic expectations of experts by experience for increased delivery of service.

Addressed by:

- Transparency on part of Local Authority making facts and documents available, explaining procedures, changing work patterns.
- Agreement that targets in 5 year Traveller Accommodation Plans will be more realistic and achievable.
- Agreed priorities.

Inconsistent attendance at meetings from experts by experience & City Councillors

- Traveller Development representative groups often left to represent areas.
- Literacy /confidence issues on part of experts by experience.
- Varying commitment levels from City Councillors.

Addressed by:

- Development groups supporting local representatives to attend.
- 2 representatives from each area to mutually support each other & ensure that each area has fair representation.
- Ensure that all experts by experience have an opportunity to speak at meetings and that their opinions are asked.
- Negotiating that Traveller Accommodation will be a Standing Item on City Council Housing Special Policy Committee agenda.

Dissatisfaction & frustration experienced by experts by experience regarding slow progress on important issues

Addressed by:

- Engaging in a facilitated review.
- Agreeing terms of reference.
- Local Authority approaching Council to nominate City Councillor Reps.
- Negotiating that Traveller Accommodation would be standing item on Housing Special Policy Committee meetings.
- Seat on LTACC allocated for representative of the Housing Special Policy Committee.
- Agreement that Chairperson would be a City Councillor or Traveller Representative nominated by Traveller Reps and Traveller Organisations.
- Recently Independent Chairperson appointed.

Pressure on Experts by Experience from own community

- Frustration from members of own community when experts by experience are not seen to produce results.
- Families may say that they are “looking after their own” – can lead to threats & risk of sparking feuding between families.
- Many live within tight knit communities and others feel that they can approach them at home at any time of day.
- Pressure leads to Experts by Experience dropping out.

Addressed by:

- Discussion around agreeing & ensuring some gain for all areas.
- Support and encouragement from Traveller Organisations and Local Authority staff.
- Supporting accommodation move if necessary.

Representation

- Participants comprise a small and specific selection of the overall Traveller Community – no guarantee they are representative of their community.
- More powerful members of group can be selected to be representative.
- Can push own family needs and agenda rather than supporting/engaging in discussion around decisions that benefit whole community.

Addressed by:

- Issues for discussion confined to community and policy issues, no individual cases discussed.
- Engagement in discussion about including all views.
- Traveller Organisations present bigger picture.
- Tried rotating meetings across areas.

Organisational culture

- Staff changes can impact.
- Individual resistance to concept of co – production.
- Representative groups sometimes work from conflict model perspective.
- Negative view of state organisations due to ineffectiveness in the past & procedures that slow progress down.

Addressed by:

- Advocacy and challenge from all members of LTACC & Senior Management.
- Building trust on all sides.
- Agreed terms of reference.
- Template to demonstrate & report progress.
- Transparency

Reciprocity

- In return for a greater control over resources and decision making Traveller participants are expected to take on greater responsibility & risk.
- Expected to take a lead in managing illegal dumping on sites, prevent vandalism of fire equipment and property, challenge behaviours in own community, be effective advocates.

Addressed by:

- Technical support such as Local Authority putting in security cameras.
- Support and encouragement.
- Local authority committing to quicker responses to difficulties.

Any Questions?

Question 1

- Select two challenges that most urgently require addressing to support effective co – production.
- Nominate (1) a co-ordinator and (2) someone who will feedback to larger group.
- Agree a response to this question within your group.
- Write 2 challenges up on separate post- its.
- 10 minutes.

Question 2

How can the 2 challenges your group selected be addressed?
Suggest strategies & approaches.

Write them up!

Feedback

- Discussion

A Song & A Thought

If Co Production had formed part of policy development and delivery from 1963 might the lyrics of this song be different?