

Case study: Friends, Families and Travellers

Friends, Families and Travellers, a national charity working to support individuals and communities from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds, received a grant of £78,035 from the Inspiring Futures Fund.

The charity offers a range of support opportunities and services for those who face disadvantages or barriers to their health, education or accommodation; it also works to challenge discrimination and end hate crime. In 2020, *Friends, Families and Travellers* supported over 1300 families with issues ranging from health to homelessness, education to financial inclusion and discrimination to employment.

Cohort: 252 young people aged 10-24 from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community will be supported by the Inspiring Futures grant funding. 120 of these young people have experienced deeply adverse living conditions: several were homeless, living alongside a dual carriageway.

Typical barriers to employment: According to research published by *Friends, Families and Travellers*, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities face some of the greatest inequalities of any ethnic group in the UK. Further, the charity also notes that pupils from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller ethnic groups have the lowest average score in GCSEs of any ethnic group.

The barriers to employment faced by young people in this funding cohort, therefore, are varied. They include: experience of homelessness; poor or ill mental health related to displacement; discrimination, harassment and abuse.

Solution: Using their grant from the Inspiring Futures fund, *Friends, Families and Travellers* hope to run a programme of digital skills training to enable young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds to fully participate in online education and social activities.

Due to the pandemic, many educational institutions adopted an online-based format, meaning that many young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds who already faced existing barriers to accessing technology were isolated further. By focusing on digital skills training, *Friends, Families and Travellers* hope to bridge this gap.

What we hope to learn: We hope this experience will enable us to understand how organisations working to support disadvantaged young people can use one-off emergency funding to enhance the services they provide for those who face discrimination or disadvantage.

In light of how the pandemic has amplified inequalities faced by those from often marginalised backgrounds, we hope the funding will help highlight areas that need more focus and attention.

