

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2023/24

Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

Summary Points (from census 2021)

- 'White Gypsy or Irish Travellers' had the highest proportion of Disabled people of all ethnic groups in Bristol.
- 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller' had the highest percentage saying their health was bad or very bad at 13%.
- Poorer health and higher level of Disability are not explained by age, because people in this ethnic group are generally young with an average age of just 28 years.
- Only 1% of Roma and 3% of Gypsy/Irish Traveller respondents were over the age of 65 compared to 16% of British born respondents in Bristol. This may be due to lower life expectancy and/or migration patterns of different age groups.
- The Gypsy and Irish Traveller population report a far higher percentage of children aged 0-15 than in those identifying as 'White British' (26% vs 16%).

Terminology

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are often categorised together under the acronym "GRT" and these communities and other nomadic groups, such as Scottish Travellers, English Romany, Show People and New Travellers, share several characteristics in common. However, Travellers and Roma each have very different customs, religion, language, and heritage (The Traveller Movement, 2023).

Health

National data and evidence:

- Frequently raised as a problem is access to primary and secondary care services (Women and Equalities Committee, 2019).
- A review of evidence found that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller populations across Europe struggle to exercise their right to healthcare. The most reported barrier to access were health service issues. This included difficulties registering with primary care and issues such as personnel being reluctant to visit camps. Discrimination and attitudes of health service personnel was a prominent theme as were cultural, language and health literacy barriers (McFadden. A, 2018).
- 74 out of 100 UK GP surgeries failed to register mystery shoppers who identified as GRT+ (Friends, Families and Travellers, 2021).
- Lack of access leads to delayed diagnoses and treatment with potential negative health consequences. Added to this, experiences of perceived discrimination and derogatory attitudes of healthcare providers further undermine access. Gypsy and Traveller people voice concerns about the likelihood of receiving help and fear facing negative judgement. A range of health difficulties are reported including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, diabetes, bladder problems, cancer, and mental health difficulties. Environmental factors, such as site locations and living conditions as well as occupational hazards, are believed by Gypsy and Traveller people to be linked to the health conditions they experience (Office for National Statistics , 2022).

- Although there is little quantitative data on the extent of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, agencies and individuals report that this is a serious and long-standing problem (Women and Equalities Committee, 2019).
- Barriers to support for sexual and/or domestic abuse may include: 1. Discrimination and Mistrust 2. Exclusion and Isolation 3. Culture and Moral Codes 4. Education, Literacy and Language 5. Risks and Repercussions (Lime Culture, 2022).
- High rates of Caesarean birth, miscarriage, pregnancy loss and/or child loss are reported by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and health professionals (Friends, Families and Travellers, 2023).
- Cancer prevention and screening Research was conducted in Wales and Southwest England; Gypsies, Roma and Travellers were interviewed to establish their knowledge of cancer prevention and screening. Although there was found to be an understanding of lifestyle factors, such as healthy diet, stopping smoking and drinking less alcohol to reduce cancer risk, there was a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of these measures, particularly in relation to smoking. Participants described cancer as a taboo disease not spoken about outside of the family. Most women reported that they engage with cervical and breast screening, but few Gypsy/Traveller men would engage with bowel screening due to a conflict with ideals of stoical masculinity (Condon, 2021).

Local health data

The 2021 census include a new response option of “Roma” within the “White” ethnic group. In Bristol, 966 people (0.2%) identified this way in 2021, the same percentage as in England and Wales. “Gypsy and Irish Traveller” was first included as an option within “White” ethnic group in 2011 and 273 respondents to the 2021 census in Bristol identified in this way, down from 359 in 2011. In Bristol, ‘White Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ had the highest percentage of people saying their health was bad or very bad at 13%. The poorer health of people identifying as ‘White Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ is not explained by age. The highest reported levels of good or very good health were among people who selected the ‘White Roma’ or the ‘Mixed White and Asian’ ethnic group, with both at 93% compared to the average for the total population of 84% (Bristol City Council, 2023).

Age

In 2021, the average age for the overall population of Bristol was 34 years (England and Wales 40 years). The average age of people who identified as gypsy/Irish traveller was 28 and for Roma was 30, suggesting a younger age profile for people from these ethnic groups than the overall population of Bristol. The Gypsy and Irish traveller population report a far higher percentage of children aged 0-15 than in those identifying as ‘White British’ (26% vs 16%). Only 14% reported ages of 50 and over compared to 33% in British born respondents.

Only 1% of Roma and 3% of Gypsy/Irish Traveller respondents were over the age of 65 compared to 16% of British born respondents in Bristol. This may be due to lower life expectancy and/or migration patterns of different age groups (Bristol City Council, 2023).

Disabled people

People identifying as 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' had the highest proportion of Disabled people of all ethnic groups in Bristol. Disability is self-reported on the census people are considered Disabled if they reported being limited 'a little' or 'a lot' in their day-to-day activities by a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness. In Bristol, more than a quarter (27%) of those who identified as 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller' said they had a long-term physical or mental health issue or disability that affected their daily lives. This is 10 percentage points more than the average for population of Bristol at 17% (Bristol City Council, 2023).

Carers

Almost 1 in 20 people identifying as 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' provided unpaid care. People in ethnic groups with higher rates of disability and poorer health typically also provided more unpaid care. Among those who identified as 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller', 16% of people provided unpaid care, a much higher proportion than any other ethnic group (Bristol City Council, 2023).

Qualifications

Those who identified within the 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller' ethnic group had the lowest proportion of people with a higher-level qualification at 22% and were the ethnic group most likely to have no formal qualifications (29%). The 'White Roma' ethnic group had the highest percentage of people with 'other qualifications' at 6% (Bristol City Council, 2023).

Employment

Overall, of younger people in Bristol, aged 16 to 24 years, 8.9% were unemployed and looking for work. This was higher for young people identifying as 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller' (14%). For the total population aged 16 to 64 years, 7% of females looked after home or family compared to 1% of males. This difference was larger among people identifying as 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller' (22% for females, 7% for males – the highest male % of all ethnic groups). The 'White Roma' and 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller' ethnic groups had the highest percentage for 'skilled trades occupations' at 16% and 14% respectively. People working in 'skilled trades occupations' are mostly men across all ethnic groups. The highest percentage of people working in elementary occupations (jobs that require fewer formal qualifications) in Bristol identified as 'White Roma' (28%). In the 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller' population this was 20% (Bristol City Council, 2023).

Living situation

Around 19% of the population in Bristol live in social rented housing. This type of housing is more common among people who identified 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller' ethnic group (48%).

Across the city, 27% of people live in a privately rented property or lived rent free. Among people identifying as 'White Roma', 4 out of 5 (82%) privately rented or lived rent free, the highest of any ethnic group. The only ethnic group with a noteworthy rate of people living in a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure is 'White Gypsy or Irish Traveller' at 8% with

57% of 'White Gypsy or Irish Travellers' living in houses and 35% in flats (Bristol City Council, 2023) .

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Next update due: December 2024

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