Gypsies & Travellers Access to and Confidence in the Criminal Justice system

ACC Janette McCormick
Cheshire Constabulary
ACPO Lead for Gypsy / Roma / Traveller issues

Today's Presentation…

- Who comprises the "criminal justice system"?
- How do Gypsies & Travellers come into contact with the system – historically and now?
- What problems do Gypsies & Travellers face in accessing services?
- What are the solutions?

Criminal Justice System…

- Police
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Home Office
- Ministry of Justice
- Probation Service
- HM Court Services
- Prison Service / National Offender Management Service
- Not an exhaustive list…

CJS issues…

- Police usually the starting point for access
- Relations historically between the police and G/T communities..?
  - Lack of engagement
  - Mutual distrust
  - Hostility
  - Prejudices
  - Different cultures
- **But not just a CJS issue…**

Main CJS issues…

- Unauthorised encampments often a source of ‘confrontation’ in the past – unauthorised developments often bring similar ‘confrontation’ locally today
- Racial discrimination still established amongst wider society – “last acceptable prejudice” – plus Hate Crime?
- Treated fairly by the CJS? How do we know?

Accommodation…

- Lack of same still fundamental problem…
- Over 3000 caravans with no official pitch
- Lack of stability / cycle of evictions
- Ministerial Working Group progress report just 2 recommendations re accommodation

Discrimination + Hate Crime

- Wider society – “last acceptable prejudice”?
- Numerous studies show Gypsy and Traveller communities are subject to hostility and discrimination
- Also evidence of mistrust of CJS agencies, plus perception that the CJS serves the settled community better

Discrimination + Hate Crime

- Gypsies & Irish Travellers are recognised as racial groups for the purposes of the **Equality Act 2010**, thus discrimination against them is prohibited by law
- Hate Crime - *Challenge it, Report it, Stop it* – Government Plan March 2012 – how effective?
- Gypsy / Roma / Traveller Hate Crime particularly under-reported – why?

Treated fairly by the CJS?

- Johnny Delaney case – May 2003

Public Sector Equality Duty

- Requires **public bodies** to **consider all individuals** when **carrying out their day to day work** – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees
- Must have due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
  - advance equality of opportunity
  - foster good relations

Solutions…

- Accept still much work to be done
- Have a joined up view of what we are trying to achieve
- Support each other
- Prioritise in line with what we are trying to do
- Accept that we are in this for the long term and stay committed to it

Solutions…

- Appropriate accommodation essential to prove the communities are treated equally
- CJS agencies should have clear equality objectives which include Gypsies and Travellers
- Clear organisational leadership in relation to these objectives
- All CJS agencies to work with the communities to enhance confidence in reporting racist incidents + serious attention to such once reported

Solutions…

- Ministerial Working Group – could provide further stimulus to agencies
- Robust ethnic monitoring needs to be undertaken consistently throughout the CJS
- 16+1 should move to 18+1 – issues re cost / IT systems acknowledged
- GTLO roles still very important to build trust and confidence

Solutions…

- Include Gypsies and Travellers in mainstream CJS strategies
- Work with people from these communities to develop preventive measures
- Treat Gypsies and Travellers, both when they are victims and suspects, as members of the local community, and in ways that strengthen their trust and confidence in the force
- **People, not policies, make the difference**

Contact Details

ACC Janette McCormick
Cheshire Constabulary Headquarters
Clemonds Hey
Oakmere Road
Winsford
Cheshire
CW7 2UA
Email : acc.pa@cheshire.pnn.police.uk