Tackling COVID-19: Travellers' rights through equality, justice and human rights





Ann Friel

Donegal Travellers Primary Health Care Coordinator & Assistant Project Manager

Largest locally based Traveller organisation in Ireland – Established 1996

DTP is a local non-governmental organisation committed to human rights for Irish Travellers and Roma. The organisation is comprised of Travellers and members of the majority settled population working in partnership to address the needs and interests of Travellers and Roma as minority ethnic groups experiencing exclusion and marginalisation.





Vision

- We have a vision where the Traveller and Roma Communities experience equality and the social, political, economic, cultural and human rights are realised across the country of Ireland.
- **Mission Statement**
- The overall mission of Donegal Travellers Project is to bring about significant social change which contributes to the eradication of racism, discrimination and inequalities as experienced by the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland.
- Collective Action
- Solidarity
- Empowerment
- Social Justice
- Equality and Anti Discrimination
- Participation
- Partnership
- Cultural diversity
- Conflict resolution and peace building

The Traveller Community



Travellers are a minority ethnic group, indigenous to the island of Ireland. Travellers maintain a shared history, language, traditions and culture. Nomadism is an important part of Traveller culture.

CSO recorded 30,987 Travellers living in Ireland , representing 0.7% of the general population in April 2016.

In Donegal, the project identified 360 Traveller families living in Donegal and north Leitrim.

The grass roots work of the Donegal Travellers Project extends throughout the County of Donegal and works with Traveller families living in rural areas close to the County border - particularly in north Leitrim.



Population of Irish Travellers



Population : 30,987 Census 2016

All Ireland Traveller Health Study 2010

ROI: 36,244

Northern Ireland: 3,905

Donegal: 350 Families



Health Inequalities in the Traveller Community

Some of the stark findings are as follows:

- Low Life Expectancy/High infant Mortality Rates
- High Suicide Rates
- Poor Housing & Accommodation
- Poor access to healthcare services
- High Levels of Racism experienced
- Unemployment
- Educational Disadvantage
- Poverty

Attitudes to Travellers 2017

- In 2017 only 26% of Travellers consider life in general to have got better for the community in the last 5 to 10 years
- 82% of the community have been affected by suicide
- 77% of Travellers have experienced discrimination in the last year/43%accessing services
- The majority of Travellers feel that they are not respected in Ireland nor is Traveller culture
- 90% of the community agree that mental health is an issue
- Accommodation, employment and Mental Health are perceived to have declined over the past years.

Community Foundation of Ireland

Continued….

- 78% of the settled community surveyed would not have a member of the Traveller Community as a neighbour
- 83% said they would not employ a Traveller
- 91% said they would not have a Traveller as a family member
- 83% said they would not have a friend who is a member of the Traveller Community
- 55% said they would not have Travellers part of the community
- 75% said they would not work with a Traveller

Increased risk of Contracting COVID-19

- Named as an ‘at-risk’ group at beginning of Pandemic.
- COVID-19 has laid bare the inequalities on the Traveller community and in particular in access to healthcare services.

Pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of the Traveller community

- Accessing water
- Facilitating self-isolation for approx. 3,000 Traveller families across Ireland
- Poor conditions on Local Authority Halting sites
- No space to self-isolate or cocoon
- Still some Traveller families without access to water or sanitation services
- Increased challenges in relation to Poor Mental Health
- High levels of increased hate speech, racism & bias
- Continue to have the lowest Education attainment in the country and COVID-19 will impact negatively further on this.

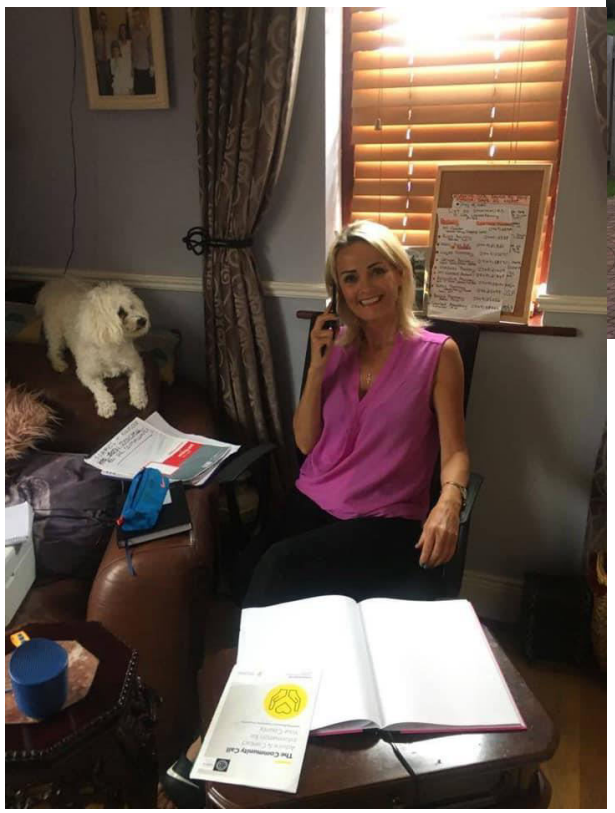
As more Travellers test positive with COVID-19 these challenges will increase and the risk is Irish Travellers will suffer the impacts of COVID-19 disproportionately as a result of many years of neglect, marginalisation and exclusion.

COVID-19 and Travellers- reported figures

	Positive Cases	Number of Deaths
1st Wave	90	1
2nd Wave	1356	4
3rd Wave	2575	5
Total	**4021**	**10**

Responding to COVID-19

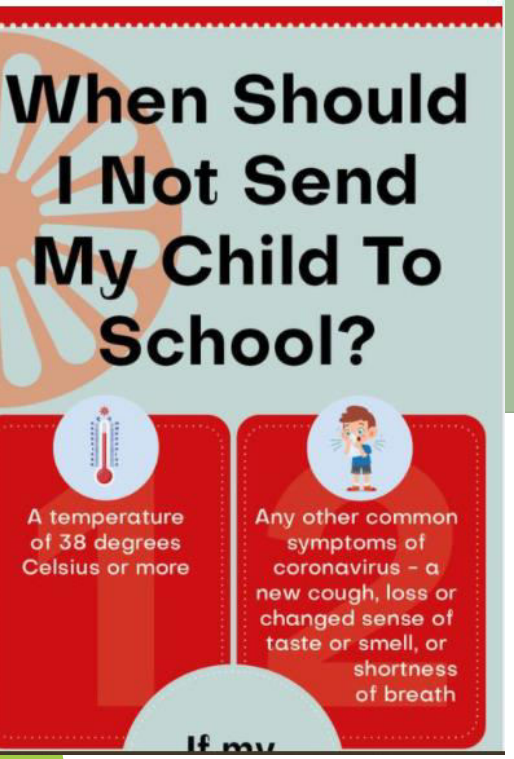






Donegal Travellers Project
30 September at 11:01 ·

EASE SHARE WIDELY
en though Donegal is in Level 3, you should send your children to
hool. The only reason you should not send your child to school is if
ur child has:
a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above)
a cough, loss or change to their sense of smell or taste, or
ortness of breath
Been in close contact with someone who has Coronavirus
Be... See more



Donegal Travellers Project
2 October at 08:30 ·

As temperatures drop and we enter into the winter months it's important to know that the following together are NOT symptoms of COVID-19:
❌Sneezing
❌Runny nose

Your children can continue to go to school if these are the only symptoms they have. For educational support please contact Caoimhe on 0868580298 or dtpedteam@gmail.com



Donegal Travellers Project is sharing a COVID-19 update.
7 October at 14:28 ·

Ann Friel Primary Healthcare Coordinator and Rose Ward Project worker discuss the HSE guidelines for level 3. Please listen below and share this post to your newsfeed.

It's so important that we continue to listen to these gudelines so that we can keep eachother safe.

If you need support or have any concerns please get in touch with us below ... See more



Donegal Travellers Project is sharing a COVID-19 update.
25 September at 10:58 ·

PLEASE SHARE

From Midnight tonight Donegal will go to Level 3.

Please see below on what you need to know for the next three weeks.
... See more



Donegal Travellers Project
Published by Kate Hagan · 23 March at 15:39 ·

Pavee Point
23 March at 14:48 ·

Great encouragement from Nellie Collins #COVID19 #Vaccine #Travellers https://youtu.be/XTIW6ai7kLo



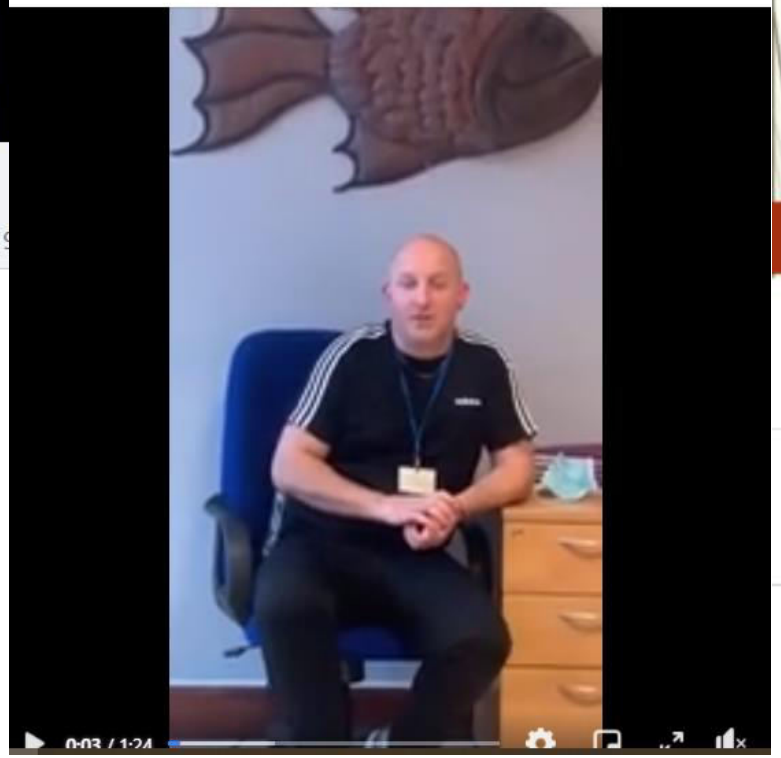
YOUTUBE.COM
Travellers Take The Vaccine - Nellie Collins
Nellie Collins explains why she thinks taking the #COVID19

Donegal Travellers Project
Published by Kate Hagan · 11 March at 09:05 ·

Listen to Hugh Friel's reaction just after he received his first dose of the Astrazeneca vaccine on Tuesday.

If you'd like to know more information about the vaccine rollout contact Ann Friel on 0861453429

#healthpromotion ... See more

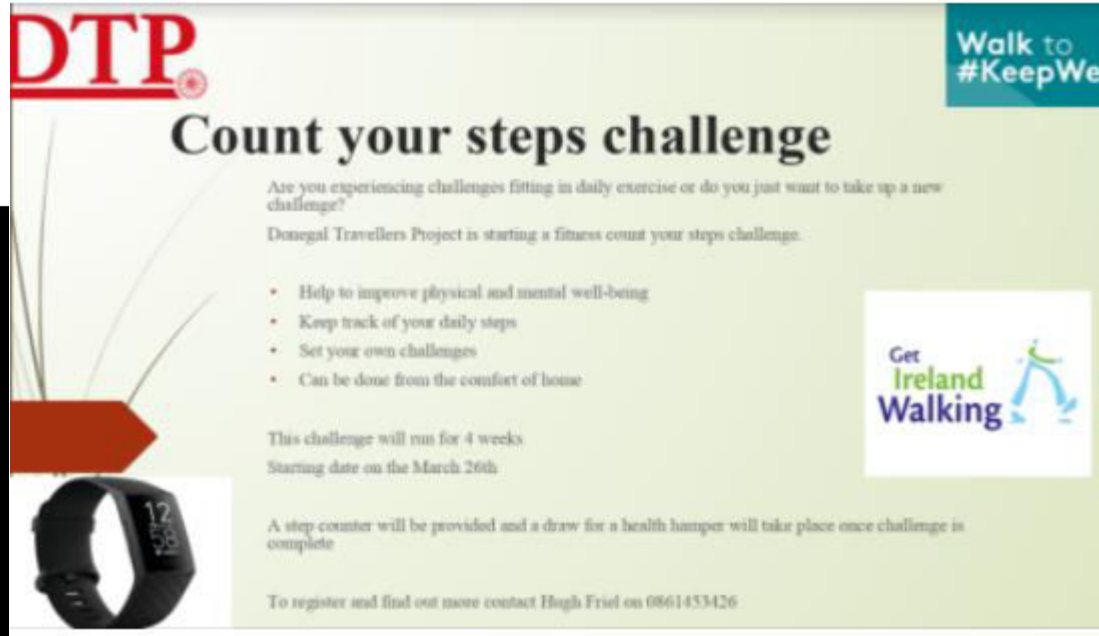


Donegal Travellers Project
Published by Kate Hagan · 16 March at 11:16 ·

COUNT YOUR STEPS CHALLENGE

Calling all Traveller men and women across the county!

Are you experiencing challenges fitting in daily exercise or do you just want to take up a new challenge?... See more

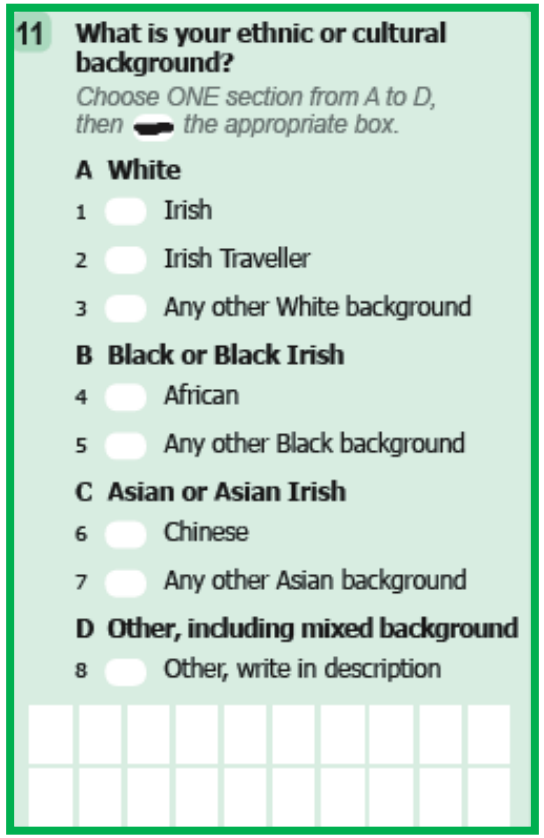


231
People reached

25
Engagements

Boost post

A Good Starting Point…



11 What is your ethnic or cultural background?

Choose ONE section from A to D, then ● the appropriate box.

A White

1 ○ Irish

2 ○ Irish Traveller

3 ○ Any other White background

B Black or Black Irish

4 ○ African

5 ○ Any other Black background

C Asian or Asian Irish

6 ○ Chinese

7 ○ Any other Asian background

D Other, including mixed background

8 ○ Other, write in description

- to **promote equality, combat discrimination and protect human rights.**

Our Approach to addressing Health Inequalities for Travellers



- A whole government approach is necessary to address health inequalities for Travellers
- Must be underpinned by a social determinant approach
- Public Sector Duty Requirements
- Recognition of the specific and additional health needs of vulnerable Travellers

What we need:

- Stroger partnership and collaborative approaches to Traveller health policy and health service provision
- Clear accountability mechanisms to monitor and evaluate implementation of policies
- Invikve Travellers and Traveller organisations in decision-making related to Traveller health *(nothing about us without us)*
- Support a strong and sustainable Traveller health infrastructure