



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Rt Hon John Whittingdale OBE MP

Minister of State for Digital, Media, Culture and Sports

By email

18 June 2020

Re: Channel 4 Dispatches “The Truth about Traveller Crime” aired on 16 April 2020

Dear Minister of State

Thank you for your response of 2 June. In our previous correspondence we informed the Department of the APPG’s formal complaint submitted to Ofcom regarding the Channel 4 Dispatches “The Truth about Traveller Crime” programme. You may be aware that Ofcom have subsequently taken the decision to launch a formal investigation into potential breaches of content standards for television and radio.

Although this is a promising step in terms of recognising the harm caused to Gypsies and Travellers and Channel 4’s potential breaches of Ofcom’s code of standards, this is by no means an isolated incident in the media. Hate speech against Gypsies, Roma and Travellers is widespread in the media. The EHRC’s 2016 report, [‘Is England fairer?’](#) highlights numerous examples of content which stereotypes and discriminates against members of these ethnic groups. The Government must work together with media regulators to protect minority groups from harm due to prejudicial media content, balancing freedom of speech with compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

Government support for the Report Racism GRT independent race hate reporting tool has been invaluable and begun to provide us with an understanding and evidence base on the nature and scale of hate incidents and crimes committed against Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. This tool shows us that online hate speech represents almost half of all incidents and crimes reported against Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. However, collecting the data is only the first step in the journey. It is essential that building upon the information gathered by the tool, the Government creates a solid plan to prevent and punish hate speech and hate crime against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

We would be interested to learn more about the timetable for updating the Hate Crime Action Plan, which we note comes to an end next month. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities can be protected from hate in media outlets and channels and more widely across the Plan.

Thank you for your time and attention on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Baroness Janet Whitaker and Kate Green MP
Co-Chairs, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies Travellers and Roma