

FRIENDS, FAMILIES & TRAVELLERS

Strategic Plan
2023 - 2026



FRIENDS,
FAMILIES &
TRAVELLERS



Introduction

This strategic plan covers the period April 2023 to end March 2026.

Whilst Friends, Families and Travellers' (FFT) mission remains the same, we have refined our plans in response to a changing context and emerging issues. We will continue to pursue our aim for a fair and equal place for all Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in UK society.

This plan looks to shape priorities and position FFT to take new opportunities that might arise with political and societal change. We will consolidate our knowledge, evidence and crucially, our partnerships to be in the best position to deliver our purpose over the next three years and beyond.

This plan is a guide to our key purpose and direction over the next three years. We have much to do in maintaining our existing services which are valued by our communities and

partners, but the context we are working in is far different from that of our previous plan in 2019.

Post-pandemic, political instability, undermining of human rights and the rule of law, and a cost-of-living crisis are having a significant and disproportionate impact on Irish Traveller, Romany, Roma and nomadic communities. We have increasing challenges of climate change, digital and financial inclusion in an expanding on-line economy, and a commitment to becoming a truly anti-racist organisation.

Our priorities are set out in our Vision Statement and our delivery plans are set out in our Action Programme. Each year, we develop Operational Plans which set out our activities in more detail.

SARAH MANN
Chief Executive Officer

Mission

We work to **end racism and discrimination** against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and to **protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.**

Vision

Accommodation:

We believe that everyone has the right to safe and adequate living conditions and that the government has a duty to facilitate the nomadic way of life.

Health and wellbeing:

We believe that everyone should receive the support, care and treatment they need, with the compassion, respect and dignity they deserve.

Education:

We believe that every child has a right to learn in a safe environment that is free from bullying and that is affirming towards their culture and way of life.

Economic and financial inclusion:

We believe that everyone has the right to equal access to employment, training, financial services and entitlements.

Challenging hate:

We believe that nobody should be treated worse, made to feel inferior or be the target of crime because they are from the Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities.

Values

We believe that:

- To address the inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities then Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people must be at the heart of all of our work.
- The inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are rooted in historic oppression and structural racism and must be understood and addressed in this context.
- There is much to celebrate within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, including cultural traditions, historical events and individuals' achievements.
- We have a role to play in upholding and protecting human rights and equalities, because we are stronger when we work together and show solidarity.
- All services provided to wider society should be accessible to and inclusive of members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Therefore, we commit to always:

- Support members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to have an active and influential role in all aspects and at all levels of our work.
- Ensure that when we are given a platform to speak about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller equality, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people are given a meaningful chance to speak and be heard.
- Recognise and share the unique and diverse histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, in order to challenge oppression and structural racism in modern day.
- Celebrate the remarkable and immense contributions Gypsy, Roma and Traveller individuals and communities bring to wider society.
- Show solidarity with other groups experiencing marginalisation or discrimination.
- Share our knowledge and understanding of inclusive service provision with other organisations and to challenge organisations when and where barriers exist.

Achievements over the last three years

The developments of the last 3 years have given FFT greater strength and insight, and we have achieved much of what we set out to do in our last strategic plan.

In the first year of the plan **our work to get voices heard saw the government commit** to a national strategy to address Gypsy and Traveller inequalities, Roma people recognised on the Census, denial of GP access exposed and the UN Rapporteur on Racism calling for change.

The second year brought Covid-19, and a **tripling of demand on our services**. We scaled up **our frontline support of over 4,000 people** each year, worked with fellow organisations, policymakers and local authorities to get support and guidance in place as **we tackled evictions** and **got water and sanitation in place**, and **worked to overcome digital exclusion of families and children in school**.

The third year started in the High Court, helping to stop **anti-Traveller wide injunctions** and **coordinating the challenge to the Policing Bill**. Support during Covid-19 continues and **over 24,000 people downloaded our Covid-19 health guidance**. We **launched a new tool** to support Primary Care Networks to improve their inclusivity and gained governmental commitments on suicide prevention.

During the plan period we **supported over 10,000 people** to achieve their rights to accommodation, education, welfare benefits

and overcoming discrimination, and **over 1,500** gained youth, mental health and education support and qualifications. **Over 5,000 people took part in our inclusive services training** and **over 5,000 watched our anti-bullying play, Crystal's Vardo**. We published over **30 pieces** of research and **gained wide media attention** for our vision for change.

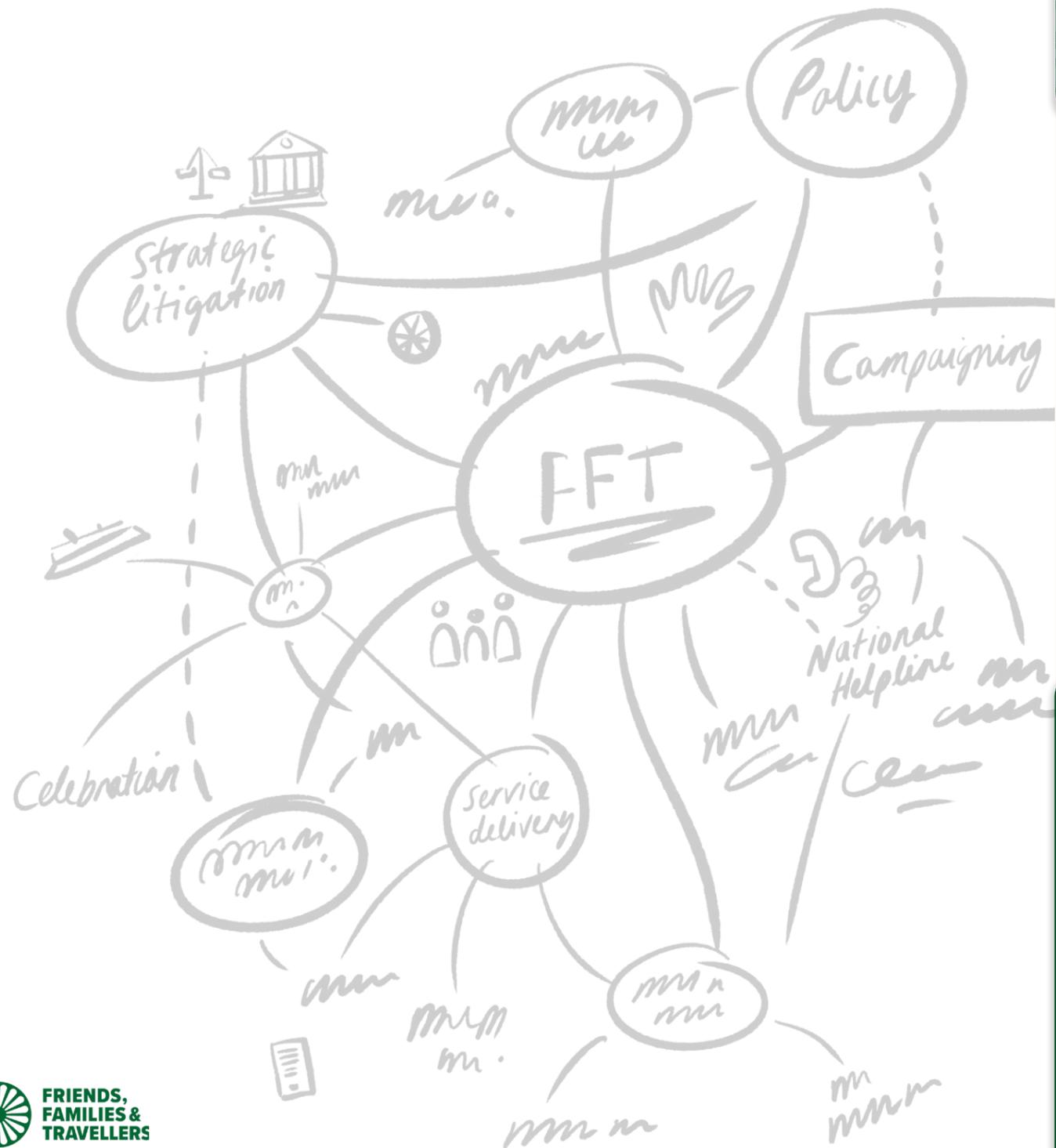
We celebrated Gypsy and Traveller histories, cultures and achievements with our support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month each year, our film series Standing on the Shoulders of Giants and established the **FFT Awards** honouring people for their outstanding contributions.

Our impact and reach were recognised by funders, the National Charity Awards and the Race Health Observatory, both for our work and our support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller civil society. We have worked to strengthen our governance and representation, with over **80% Trustees, 70% management team and 60% staff and 100% paid Interns from the diverse travelling communities**.

Over this period, we have also worked consistently to safeguard our financial security and effectively manage our risks, doubling in size and reach since 2019.

How FFT works

Our work is underpinned by an organisational Theory of Change.



Community Support

The core of our work is supporting individuals and families with the issues that matter most to them, whether it is help with an eviction, fleeing violence, or accessing healthcare. Over half our resources are dedicated to this work.



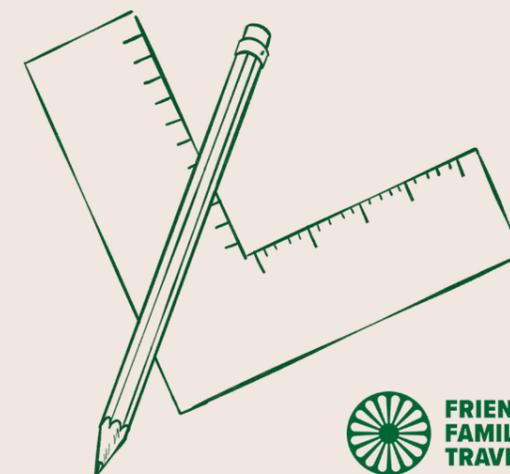
Evidence

Issues arising from our casework and our research, builds an evidence base from the experiences of individuals and families, helping identify trends and cluster issues.



Improving Practice

We help co-develop services which are inclusive of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, and we influence the policies and practice of other organisations, through key projects and capacity building.



Celebration

We celebrate the remarkable and immense contributions Gypsy, Roma and Traveller individuals and communities bring to wider society, from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, to the FFT Awards.



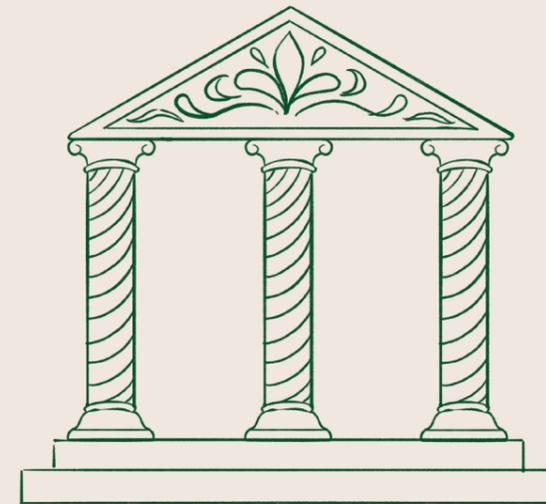
Strategic Litigation

Where necessary, we will take legal routes to ensure the rights and entitlements of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are respected.



Our people

We work to create and sustain allies, recognising that Gypsy, Roma Traveller civil society is small but growing. We share knowledge and expertise to get things done, help others to learn and we are committed to collaborative partnerships.



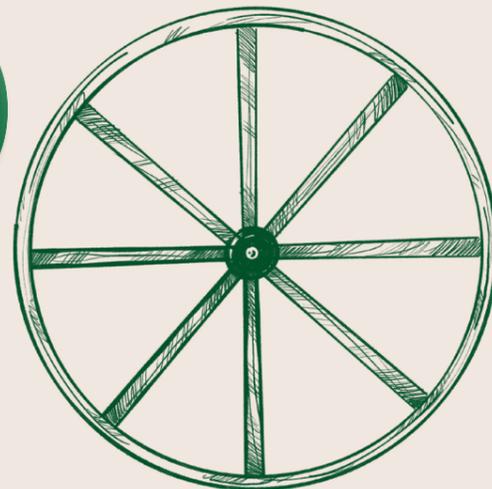
Influencing

We use evidence and human stories to make a compelling case for change.

As the Secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, we engage with parliamentarians, government and policy makers.

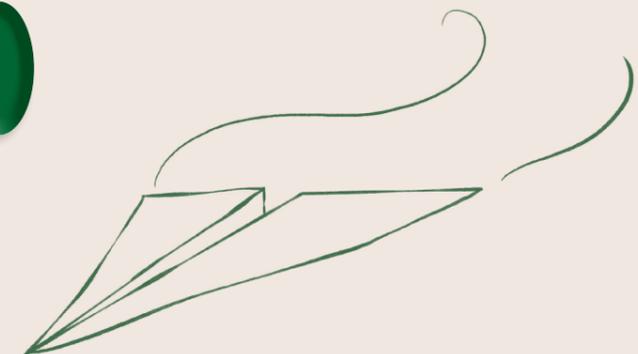
Supporting Allies

We are committed to investing in our people. We recruit, support, and develop community members, and offer paid, supported Internships. There is much to do, and we are committed to becoming a truly anti-racist organisation.



Campaigning

Our campaigning adopts a multipronged approach, engaging all the necessary levers to bring about change, from leveraging national media to landing in MPs' inboxes.



Opportunities

Over the next three years we will pursue opportunities and build on success:

- We will capitalise on our strong experience of working within the **Inclusion Health** agenda, as well as with **Integrated Care Systems** in Sussex and nationally. We will continue our focus on **access to primary care, mental health, health improvement** and **maternal health**.
- We will work with providers to meet the need for **accessible communication**, as well as strengthening **digital inclusion** for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
- We will build on our work **reaching key school audiences** to represent Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in education.
- We will bring organisations and individuals together to **address isolation** and **reconnect communities** pushed further apart by the pandemic.
- We will support the enthusiasm for **celebrating heritage** and welcome the warm audience for **positive images and stories**.
- We will build on our work with **parliamentarians through the APPG**, with **Select Committees** and the **Joint Committee on Human Rights** to deliver compelling cases for change.
- Where other methods fail, we will continue our strong progress on **strategic legal challenges** on accommodation.

Challenges

We recognise there are issues where progress is likely to be incremental:

- Attacks on the use of Judicial Reviews and European Convention on Human Rights instruments **weakens the ability to uphold rights of communities**.
- Potential cuts and **politically motivated scrutiny** on charity sector likely to **increase drive towards 'safe' and risk-averse campaigning**.
- **Legal Aid cuts gravely threaten recourse to justice** for community members.
- Overcoming the historic shortfall of **accommodation supply will take time** and will be further hindered by the **withdrawal of central government from local policymaking**.
- Climate instability **disproportionately impacts Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, people living in caravans and sites located in flood plains**.
- Entrenched assumptions and inertia present challenges to influencing **standards for professions** who provide services to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
- Poor leadership, biased media, and intransigent views present challenges to overcoming the prevalence of **prejudice, hate and discrimination**, with regulators failing to act.
- Governmental resistance to recognising **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller histories within the school curriculum** is a barrier to educational inclusion.
- Educational outcomes for children in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities **remain poor and worsening**, with **no governmental roadmap** for correcting this.
- Government **failure to include Romany Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller** groups in ethnic data monitoring compounds the ability to action community-focused solutions.
- Marginalisation and exclusion present barriers to recognising and addressing **Domestic Violence** committed by some people from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities.
- The repeated use of the nomadic way of life for electoral point scoring **increases hostility** and **reduces Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to political footballs**.
- **Cost-of-living crisis and fuel poverty** disproportionately impacts marginalised communities, **increasing reliance on our service provision** and pressure on our resources.

Stakeholder engagement and partnership

Our strong partnerships and reputation for constructive cooperation have been a key tool for our success and we will continue to build and strengthen partnerships:

- We will continue to build on representation of nomadic communities within our organisation and centring **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people** in our work.
- We will reach out to **further health partners**, so that they may extend inclusive practice.
- In our projects and promoting inclusive services training, we will engage with more **national voluntary organisations and housing associations**.
- We will **engage with organisations** who have extended goodwill towards creating a more accommodating society for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.
- We will seek to share our learning with all **local authorities and national institutions** to make their strategies and services more inclusive.
- We will target engagement with government agencies and bodies within the **Criminal Justice System**.



Image taken from a photoseries produced by Young Gypsy and Traveller people in Sussex

Strategy, Objectives, Impact

*We have a focused strategy,
clear objectives and big ambitions*

The following page looks at our **strategic initiatives, 3-year objectives** and **what we hope our impact will be** up until 2026, **in our pursuit** to **protect the nomadic way of life** and **end racism and discrimination** against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

This expands on our **Theory of Change** through a visual breakdown of the different avenues of **tackling injustice on the frontline and nationally**, in line with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people's needs and experiences.

From advocacy and support, to building community skills and connections, **here is what we want to achieve over the coming years:**

Our Initiatives

Our Objectives

Our Impact

Advocacy, Casework and Support

Access to justice, housing, healthcare and education for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people

Families and individuals able to tackle issues independently

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Shifting narratives

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller histories and cultures celebrated and promoted

Narratives shift and society embraces and acknowledges Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

Improving community skills and opportunities

Organisations improve their engagement and inclusivity

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people gain essential skills, qualifications and confidence

OVERALL IMPROVEMENT IN PEOPLE'S LIFE CHANCES

Practice development

Training of key service providers

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people heard and recognised

Influencing national decision makers

National and local government understand more about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

MORE SUPPORTIVE POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC BODIES

Engaging international bodies

International treaties used to hold government, parliament and parliamentarians to account

Clearer evidence, fairer laws and policies

Supporting partners and allies

Better support available for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people through partnership working

Coordinate joint influencing activities and make case for support of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller civil society with funders and commissioners

LONG TERM CIVIL SOCIETY RESILIENCE

Strengthening FFT

Bolster organisational structures and implement learning and development programmes

Develop anti-racism and trauma-informed practice

FFT staff strengthened and clients better supported



**FRIENDS,
FAMILIES &
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