Progress Update March 2012

The All Ireland Traveller Health Study reports were launched on the 2nd September, 2010. The Summary of Findings report highlighted a number of key points which the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Department of Health and Children (DOHC) were required to consider and take forward appropriately in conjunction with Health and Social Care bodies and other Government Departments.

Some of the key points included:

- A strategic action plan should be developed
- Adequacy of accommodation is essential
- All aspects of mother and child services merit top priority
- Men’s health issues need to be addressed specifically (men are dying 15 years younger than their settled counterparts)
- There is a concerted need to address cause-specific issues for respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

In December 2010, the Southern Health and Social Services Trust (the Trust) established a Trust Traveller Action Group to progress the recommendations emanating from this Study relevant to the Southern Trust. The group which meets every two months comprises representation from Travellers and local Traveller Support Groups together with Trust staff. Travellers who had participated in the All Ireland Traveller Health Study as peer researchers were asked to join the group so that they could see the impact of the research and be involved in taking the recommendations forward in their own areas. Six Travellers agreed to attend the meetings.

First Steps—Baseline mapping exercise and development of Trust Traveller Action Plan

The first task undertaken by the group was to carry out a mapping exercise to provide an overall picture of the approaches taken within each Directorate. The findings from the mapping exercise informed the Traveller Action group work-plan.
Southern Area Action with Travellers (SAAT) a multi-agency, multi-sectoral alliance established by the SHSSB in 2003 that is recognised within the Southern Area as the key strategic partnership which co-ordinates interagency work with Travellers and provides the main vehicle for tackling social exclusion.

Safe and Well This 5 year project which is managed by Craigavon Traveller Support Committee on behalf of the SAAT partnership works with Travellers throughout the Southern area. The focus is on community development, health related activities and work with young Travellers. One of the staff employed by Safe and Well has a specific focus on Male Health which is of particular relevance to recommendations in the All Ireland Traveller Health Study.

Belong This project is funded by Atlantic Philanthropies with the aim of promoting a sense of belonging amongst BME children aged 7 to 12 years, including Traveller children, across the Southern area. Belong works in partnership with other children’s services on three programmes of activities;
- Cultural Confidence and Competence Programme
- Anti-Bullying and Anti-Racial Bullying Programme
- Education Programme supporting BME children and young people to improve their educational achievement and participation in school activities.

CAWT Social Inclusion Project CAWT has been successful in securing funding from the European Union INTERREG IVA programme to progress a three year cross border Social Inclusion project which includes Travellers as one of its target groups. The overall aim of this project is to improve the health status of the population and reduce inequalities in health. The project will improve social inclusion and demonstrate health and social gain by developing and delivering a forty-week training programme for twenty Travellers. Upon completion of the training programme participants will have developed the confidence, competence, knowledge and skills to be employed as community health workers in mainstream agencies. A total of 8 Travellers (5 from SHSCT area) have completed the Training for Trainers programme which has enabled them to co-deliver the Employment Skills programme which is currently underway.

There is also a strand which will focus on access to services and health literacy. Literature reviews on the agreed target groups have been completed and the audit framework is currently being developed. Irish Travellers are one of the three target groups together with the LGB&T community and people with sensory disabilities. The key settings to be considered are mental health, GP Practices and A&E services across the CAWT region.
There are a number of Traveller Support Projects developed through a range of funding bodies

Transforming Learning Communities

This Southern Regional College’s (SRC) project launched early in 2010 with Big Lottery funding aims to provide a range of education, training and support services for Travellers in the Southern Region.

Support for local Traveller Support Groups (TSGs). These are at the heart of the work and their staff interface on a daily basis with Travellers. There are currently Traveller Support groups in Armagh, Coalisland and Craigavon offering a wide range of programmes to meet educational, health and accommodation needs for Travellers. TSG’s are at the centre of work which has enabled the Board to build profiles of Travellers in the Southern Area. The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) fund Traveller support work across Southern area. Contractual arrangements are in place and staff from the Trust are involved in the management committees of these TSGs on an advisory capacity. In Newry, while there is no Traveller Support Group, there is an alliance of statutory, voluntary and community groups named the Newry and Mourne Trust SAAT Implementation Group. Again staff from the Trust are involved in an advisory capacity.

Traveller Led Groups- Two groups have emerged in the Southern Area which are Traveller led, An Crushan Munia in the South Armagh area, with support from Women and Family Health Initiative and Dha Cultuir in the Dungannon area supported by Safe and Well. Both groups have been a very welcome development but there is a need for ongoing capacity building with other Travellers who have not engaged with new projects.

Early Years Toybox

The outreach element of Toybox which brings play and educational support to Travellers had proved very successful in reaching very young Travellers.

Ulster Cancer Foundation

Ulster Cancer Foundation has a programme targeting Traveller Male health and is at the early stages of engaging in the Newry area.

Early Years Toybox

Ulster Cancer Foundation

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This Trust led project has been funded by the Lottery to focus on the needs of disadvantaged communities across the Southern Trust area. BME communities, including Travellers are being targeted by the project. REACH offers a range of programmes designed to promote health and well-being while promoting the personal development of participants with a focus on the environment and effective use of green space. In addition to the work outlined above under partnerships and fora, within the Promoting Wellbeing Teams, there is 1 Traveller Support Worker and 3 BME Community Development Workers who directly support individuals and communities from the Traveller community. The Traveller Family Support Worker plays a key support role to Traveller families in the Newry and Mourne area and is working closely with new project workers to enable access to Travellers in the area. An area wide BME Drugs and Alcohol worker is based in the Newry Promoting Well Being Team and is part of a regional action plan to improve outcomes for children born to and/or living in households where there is alcohol and drug misuse, including the misuse of over-the-counter and prescribed medication. In common with many marginalised communities alcohol and substance abuse is a significant issue for Traveller communities. Additional Hidden Harm Strategy resource has been drawn down to fund some of this work.

Human Resources—Equality Unit

Southern Trust Race Equality and Human Rights Forum established by the Trust with representation from the SAAT (Safe & Well) partnership and other BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) support groups to provide opportunities for consultation that enables BME communities in the Southern Area to enter into dialogue and influence Trust policies on issues that are identified as being of fundamental importance to these communities.

Children and Young People’s Services - Maternal and Child Health.

The Trust is currently reviewing its Antenatal Education Programme and accessibility for women from ethnic minority groups including the Traveller Community is one of its considerations. Health Visitors have been recording ethnic identifier information and have introduced a revised Personal Health Record from October 2010 which has an even more robust ethnic identifier.

Older People and Primary Care - Enhanced Services

In relation to Heart Failure, COPD and Diabetes there is a need for more systematic collation of ethnic monitoring information. Small numbers of Travellers were reported on Heart Failure, Diabetes and COPD caseloads, by manual enquiry.
What else we said we would do

To date there have been seven meetings of the Trust Traveller Action Group. A Traveller Action Group work-plan informed by the findings from the mapping exercise has been developed with specific actions identified under eight key themes:

1. All Directorates will work to improve their understanding of Traveller’s cultural and health needs and how they can respond to these;
2. Training will be provided to all staff to help them become more aware and sensitive to the needs of Travellers;
3. All services will review how Travellers can become more involved in the design and delivery of services;
4. All services will review their information materials to reflect the needs of Travellers and their ways of communicating with Travellers;
5. Information systems will be developed to monitor the uptake of services by Travellers and their satisfaction with services;
6. Programmes will be developed to target the specific needs of travellers in relation to health and wellbeing, family support, parenting, nutrition and dietetics, mental health and disability;
7. The Trust will act as an advocate to promote the health, social and wellbeing needs of Travellers with other service partners and will continue to support partnerships with local Traveller groups;
8. The Trust will review and promote employment and volunteering opportunities with Travellers.

What we have done to date

Progress on the Trust’s Traveller Action Group work-plan is as follows:

- Encouraged 6 Travellers and representatives from Local Traveller Support groups to participate in the Trust’s Traveller Action Group;
- Continued to support linkages between local Traveller Support Groups/workers and Trust service Teams e.g. Head of Specialist Primary Care Services has met with Traveller Support Workers to discuss effective communication between specialist teams i.e. COPD, Heart Failure & Diabetes. Contact details have been shared and are being used by both teams and support workers;
- Specialist Primary Care teams are providing basic training on their services to Traveller Support Workers to ensure they are aware of the criteria and benefits of the services. The Traveller Support Workers will be able to clearly communicate to Traveller communities the importance of attending clinics with nurse/AHP specialists;
- Mental Health training carried out with Traveller Support Workers on recognising the signs and symptoms of mental illness and how to seek support;
- Multicultural Handbook updated in conjunction with NI Chaplaincy Service and Trust’s Race Equality Forum and uploaded to the Trust’s intranet December 2011;
- Race Etiquette Booklet developed, uploaded to the intranet and website and mailed out to hard to reach staff November 2011;
- Traveller Information Leaflet developed, uploaded to the intranet and website and mailed out to hard to reach staff November 2011;
What we have done (continued)

- A short fact sheet has been developed for staff in Acute Services providing guidance on the cultural beliefs of Travellers and contact details of where to get support/guidance when working with a large group of Travellers;
- Six sessions of the “Cultural Awareness Training Programme” currently being delivered for frontline staff as part of Improving the Patient/Client Experience;
- Development and launch of Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Toolkit for staff June 2011;
- Development and implementation of annual Directorate PPI Action Plans outlining plans for enhancing involvement under the key areas of provision of information; levels of involvement; evidencing patient/client experience standards; training and monitoring and evaluation;
- Traveller men in Newry, Armagh and Craigavon (and chair of An Crushan Munia) have begun to design qualitative men’s health research project with Promoting Wellbeing Manager in Newry as part of Master’s in Social Work research project. They have also agreed to further work in an advisory capacity to pilot the research questions and assist with gaining access to men at research stage and in contributing to recommendations arising from research;
- Traveller representation on the Trust’s Maternity Services Liaison Committee to influence policy decision, and inform the development of the service;
- Partial Booking Service - date of birth to be added to these letters to assist Traveller Support Workers to identify the specific Traveller concerned.
- Mental Health Service User Support Groups have been set up across the Southern Trust area to include Traveller Support Workers in the shaping and designing of mental health and disability programmes and services.

Work is commencing to update these systems to ensure that they offer this monitoring option;

- A range of training on sexual health, drugs and alcohol, nutrition, physical activity, positive mental health aimed at targeting services and improving access and up-take of health improvement programmes, family support, training and enablement support for Travellers in local areas has been delivered;
What we have done (continued)

- The Primary Care Health Promotion Officer has begun to make GPs aware of Promoting Wellbeing Team services including links with local Traveller Support services;
- Links made with the Integrated Care Team, HSCB to ensure that opportunities are maximised with GP’s under the LES (Locally Enhanced Agreement) for outreach and Traveller appropriate service delivery;
- Continued support for the formation of a Traveller Led Group for the Inner Newry area;
- Continue to provide support and advice to local Traveller Support Groups through membership of management committees;
- Continued representation on Traveller partnerships such as SAAT, Safe and Well, Regional Traveller Health and Wellbeing Forum;
- Overarching Work Placement Policy drafted November 2011. This was raised at the Southern Investment Partnership with a view to seeking greater collaboration with regards to potential job placement opportunities;
- Travellers continue to be involved in Student Social Work Induction Programme twice yearly;
- 1 Traveller woman recruited and still active as Community Health Mentor under REACH;
- 8 Travellers (5 from Southern Trust) completed T4T programme under CAWT Social Inclusion Project;
- 21 Travellers (14 from Southern Trust) participating in CAWT Employment Skills training programme;
- Child and Maternal Health Subgroup facilitated a planning café style workshop to develop a local action plan to improve health outcomes for women and children from the Traveller community;
- A joint application from the Trust in partnership with Craigavon Traveller Support Committee was submitted to the British Heart Foundation to identify risk factors in the Traveller Community and make earlier and better connections into primary and secondary care services. Funding has just been approved.

What was the impact of involving Travellers and Traveller Support Group representatives?

- Influenced and shaped the development of the Multicultural Handbook, Race Etiquette Booklet, Traveller Information leaflet for staff and the fact sheet for staff in Acute Services which provides guidance on appropriate approaches for Travellers being admitted to or visiting hospital;
- Agreement to deliver Traveller Cultural Awareness Training to relevant Trust staff groups and to receive health and social care training to improve access to services and up-take of health improvement programmes;
- Agreement that Partial Booking Service letters will include date of birth to assist Traveller Support Workers to identify the specific Traveller concerned;
- Closer links forged between Traveller community, Traveller Support Workers and key Trust staff delivering health and social care services;
Impact (continued)

- Improved understanding of needs of Traveller community in relation to health and social care and the barriers to accessing services and those of Traveller Support Workers in supporting Travellers to improve health and wellbeing and access services;
- Improved understanding of how to access health and social care services appropriately and the issues that result in inappropriate service access;
- Realisation that breastfeeding within the Traveller community is a goal that will only be achieved in the long term with sustained one to one support from health visitors and midwives reinforced by group discussions to influence cultural perceptions and that a focus is also required on weaning to ensure that bottle fed babies receive the maximum benefits;
- Highlighted the need to review and up-date the LES (Local Enhanced Service) provision agreements with local GP Practices to ensure that nomadic Travellers have flexible access to primary care services;
- Highlighting access issues in relation to dental services.

What did the Travellers and Traveller Support Group representatives think of being involved in this way?

“These meetings are very useful. Instead of us just being called to account for the funding we have been given, we have productive and meaningful discussions about the real issues Travellers face in accessing health and social care services and together we identify ways to overcome the barriers” Traveller Support Group

“I go to the meetings for the young ones. We are able to say what our problems are. We have learnt more about Travellers rights with doctors, dentists and other health services.” Traveller
What is planned for the future?

All Directorates will work to improve their understanding of Traveller's cultural and health needs and how they can respond to these:

- Continue to encourage Travellers and representatives from Local Traveller Support groups to participate in the Trust’s Traveller Action Group;
- Continue to build comprehensive information on profile of Traveller population and needs using 6 high level outcomes in Children's Services Planning Framework;
- Continue to support linkages between local Traveller Support Groups/workers and Trust service Teams;
- Promote use of Multicultural Handbook, Race Etiquette Booklet, Traveller Information Leaflet and Fact Sheet for Acute Services staff;
- Training will be provided to all staff to help them become more aware and sensitive to the needs of Travellers;
  - Use findings from Health and Social Care Equality Training Audit to inform action plan;
  - Continue to promote use of revised screening template and training on equality screening and equality impact assessment;
  - Consider further sessions of the “Cultural Awareness Training Programme” as part of Improving the Patient/Client Experience;
  - Training is to be provided by Traveller Support Workers on culture and needs of Travellers;
  - Equality Unit to finalise and deliver Cultural Awareness training for Acute Services staff; 6th module Discovering Diversity E-Learning Programme for staff.

All services will review how Travellers can become more involved in the design and delivery of services;

- Continue to promote use of Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Toolkit for staff;
- Continue to encourage the involvement of Travellers when developing and implementing annual Directorate PPI Action Plans;
- Continue to encourage Travellers and representatives from Local Traveller Support groups to participate in the Trust’s Traveller Action Group;
- Continue to support linkages between local Traveller Support Groups/workers and Trust service Teams;
- Promoting Wellbeing Manager in Newry to progress qualitative men’s health research project as part of Master’s in Social Work research project;
- Trust Maternal and Child Health Subgroup to take forward recommendations from planning café style workshop in development of local action plan on improving health outcomes for women and children from the Traveller community;
- Acute services to continue to encourage and support Traveller representation on the Trust’s Maternity Services Liaison Committee;
- Head of Midwifery & Gynaecology and Head of Health Visiting to progress recommendations emanating from the workshop to address the needs of Traveller women throughout pregnancy in the pre pregnancy and antenatal period.
What is planned for the future? (continued)

All services will review their information materials to reflect the needs of Travellers and their ways of communicating with Travellers;

- Continue to support and encourage through the development and implementation of Directorate PPI Action Plans;
- Continue to support linkages between local Traveller Support Groups/workers and Trust service Teams;
- Review provision of health information taking on board feedback from consultation carried out as part of Men’s health research project;
- Continue to provide Patient Support Service;
- Partial Booking Service—date of birth to be added to these letters to assist Traveller Support Workers to identify the specific Traveller concerned.

Information systems will be developed to monitor the uptake of services by Travellers and their satisfaction with services;

- The Trust’s Information Team will commence work to ensure that existing information systems have the facility to record ethnicity including Irish Travellers;
- Following this awareness raising will be undertaken to ensure that staff start to record ethnicity where this has not been happening so that the Trust has information on the up-take of services by Travellers and the satisfaction and effect of services provided.

Programmes will be developed to target the specific needs of travellers in relation to health and wellbeing, family support, parenting, nutrition and dietetics, mental health and disability;

- Continue to ensure effective communication between specialist teams e.g. COPD, Heart Failure & Diabetes and Traveller Support Workers;
- Links with Traveller Support Workers will also be developed with core services such as physiotherapy and dietetics;
- Physiotherapists from all directorates especially Primary Care, Children & Young People (CYP) and Mental Health & Disability (MHD) will meet with Traveller representatives to work through how the referral process and attendance at clinics etc can be improved;

- Continue to liaise with Traveller Support groups to deliver further training aimed at targeting services and improving access and up-take of health improvement programmes, family support, training and enablement support for Travellers in local areas;
- The Primary Care Health Promotion Officer will continue to make GPs aware of Promoting Wellbeing Team (PWBT) services including links with local Traveller Support services;
- Specialist Primary Care teams are to provide basic training on their services to Traveller Support Workers to ensure they are aware of the criteria and benefits of the services;
- Traveller Support Workers will be able to clearly communicate to Traveller communities the importance of attending clinics with nurse/Allied Health Professional specialists.
The Trust will act as an advocate to promote the health, social and wellbeing needs of Travellers with other service partners and will continue to support partnerships with local Traveller groups;

- Maintain links made with the Integrated Care Team, HSCB to ensure that opportunities are maximised with GP’s under the LES (Locally Enhanced Agreement) for outreach and Traveller appropriate service delivery;
- Continue to support the formation of a Traveller Led Group for the Inner Newry area;
- Continue to provide support and advice to local Traveller Support Groups through membership of management committees;
- Continued representation on Traveller partnerships such as SAAT, Safe and Well, Regional Traveller Health and Wellbeing Forum.
- Link with other service partners such as local Councils and Northern Ireland Housing Executive to promote the need for appropriate accommodation to meet Traveller needs.

The Trust will review and promote employment and volunteering opportunities with Travellers;

- Continue to promote and progress Overarching Work Placement Policy with a view to seeking greater collaboration from IFH partners with regards to potential job placement opportunities;
- Travellers continue to be involved in Student Social Work Induction Programme twice yearly;
- 1 Traveller woman recruited and still active as Community Health Mentor under REACH;
- 8 Travellers that completed T4T programme under CAWT Social Inclusion Project are supported to co-deliver Employment Skills Training programme;
- Travellers supported to complete CAWT Employment Skills Training programme.

What is planned for the future? (continued)

- Dermatology Team to work with Travellers and Traveller Support groups to develop an education package for Traveller Community on the dangers of sun-bed use and skin cancers in general;
- Development of further programmes and initiatives to address specific men’s health issues;
- Development of further programmes and initiatives to ensure improved access to and up-take of all aspects of mother and child services;
- Progress roll out of British Heart Foundation project in the Craigavon area in partnership with Craigavon Traveller Support Committee.
If you are interested in becoming part of the Trust’s Traveller Action Group, please speak to your local Traveller Support Worker or contact:

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