

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE

**Enabling access
to adult learning
for Gypsy, Roma
and Traveller
communities**



**A TOOLKIT FOR
PRACTITIONERS
IN WALES**



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



SEFYDLIAD DYSGU A GWAITH
LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE

“For too long Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities have been excluded or struggled to feel included in education opportunities at all levels. Lack of awareness, flexibility, support and relevance have contributed to the barriers potential students from the ‘GRT’ community face whether at school, in further, higher or adult education.

Many of the young people and the adults Travelling Ahead works with aspire to furthering their opportunities and learning both academic and vocational, yet face ignorance and sometimes prejudice which may make them feel education ‘is not for me’. Working alongside communities to find practical and positive ways to provide support and structure to encourage take up, or a return to educational opportunities in the right way and at the right pace is crucial. As one young person said on visiting a university campus for the first time - ‘I want a slice of this!’

It’s time for equality of opportunity to really mean something for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and for educational institutions to make the changes that are needed to ensure this happens.

Trudy Aspinwall

Team Manager
Travelling Ahead: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
Advice & Advocacy Service

“It’s completely changed my life, I was living on the dole with no job and now I’m looking at jobs that I’d never have dreamed of.”

Shelley Arthur
Learner Experience

“With each course, my confidence grew. Although it had taken twenty something years for me to realise that I wasn’t stupid, at last I thought I can maybe do the same things as other people.”

Leeanne Morgan
Learner Experience

“One thing I’m learning very quickly is that trust is a big factor; and trust is earned. You can’t expect people to respond positively to a brand-new project straight away. Just six months in, I know I need to be consistent in my approach and that it’s all about engagement; getting to know the communities, getting to know the families, listening and trying to deliver just what people want.”

Gareth Thomas,
Gypsies and Travellers
Wales,
PROSPER Project.

INTRODUCTION

This resource has been developed by Learning and Work Institute (L&W), in partnership with the Welsh Government and in response to the Welsh Government Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers Action Plan.

L&W is a campaigning, policy and research organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion in Wales and the UK. We bring together 90 years of combined history and heritage from 'National Institute of Adult Continuing Education' and 'Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion'. We want everyone to realise their potential in learning, work and throughout their life.

The purpose of this resource is to enable schools and post-16 learning providers to reflect on their engagement with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and to support better planning for more effective inclusion and access to learning opportunities.

This resource has been developed through discussions with learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and organisations which support them. Information and case studies have been sourced

from across Wales and further afield. There are links to video, audio and written case study material to illustrate how projects and organisations are delivering effective learning opportunities.

This toolkit is a starting point for further conversations, partnership work and action to improve the level of engagement, understanding and success of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in adult learning.

"Though each of these communities is very different, they often experience similar difficulties in accessing public services and experience similar poor outcomes ... Language, cultural and geographic differences will often mean that the support required by each community will vary."

Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers,
Welsh Government Action Plan.



THE CHALLENGES

9 OUT OF 10
GRT PUPILS LEAVE
SCHOOL WITHOUT
FIVE GOOD GCSEs



"9 out of 10 GRT pupils leave school without five good GCSEs: Fewer than 10% of Gypsy/Roma pupils and fewer than 20% of Irish Traveller pupils achieve 5 GCSEs graded A - C, compared to approximately 60% of all pupils nationally."*

Source - Kings College Report 2017



10
TIMES LESS
LIKELY TO GO
TO UNIVERSITY

"Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) are ten times less likely to go to university: 3-4% of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers aged 18-30 accessed Higher Education in 2014, compared to 43% of 18-30 year olds in the national population."

Source - Kings College Report 2017

"Educational attendance and attainment rates remain lower than for other groups, health outcomes are poorer, unemployment is higher than for the general population and discrimination still regularly occurs. Further work is necessary to ensure we maintain progress towards equality for these groups."

Introduction - Enabling
Gypsies Roma and Travellers
2018

DISCRIMINATION
HALF OF BRITISH
PEOPLE



"Discrimination - Half of British people admitted having an 'unfavourable view' of Roma people in a 2014 survey."

Source - Kings College Report 2017

"There is still a very long way to go to ensure that people from these communities can access opportunities and services on an equal basis with everyone else, free of discrimination."

Julie James, AM
Foreword of Enabling Gypsies,
Roma and Travellers 2018



QUARTER
ACHIEVE
A GOOD
LEVEL OF
DEVELOPMENT

"Even at the end of reception year, only a quarter of Gypsy and Roma pupils achieve 'a good level of development' compared to more than two-thirds of pupils overall."

Source - Kings College Report 2017

WELSH GOVERNMENT POLICY

The Welsh Government's [Enabling Gypsies Roma and Travellers Plan 2018](#) replaces the Travelling to a Better Future Framework for Action and Delivery Plan 2011 and remains the UK's only dedicated strategy seeking to improve outcomes for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

The report provides a clear action plan to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities around key policy areas such as housing, health and education, employment, advice and advocacy, information sharing and community networks. The plan aligns with other key policy and laws including: [Prosperity for All: The National Strategy, Taking Wales Forward 2017](#), Equality Act 2010 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

WATCH

READ

"Adult Learning supports the development of skills, improves health and wellbeing and is a catalyst for social engagement and integration. Skills are vital to our economy and we want to support adults to gain the skills they need to find employment; or to progress onto further learning. We want to ensure every person in Wales has access to good basic skills to help them to survive and thrive in our communities. Adult Learning has benefits much broader than skills. We want to encourage all adults to enjoy learning. The value of Adult Learning lies in its potential to reach individuals 'close to home', particularly those who might not otherwise engage in learning. We will focus our public resources on helping those who are in greatest need of our help; to ensure that everyone can access opportunities to learn and to progress. We believe that this is an important and worthwhile investment in individuals and communities."

READ

VISION

Adult Learning in Wales, the 2017 Welsh Government policy document states:

"A Wales where learning is at the core of all we do; where participation in learning is encouraged and rewarded; and where people have equal opportunities to gain the skills for life and work that they need to prosper"

READ MORE

Wales Adult Learning
Policy 2017

"Many schools utilise their Pupil Development Grant (PDG) funding to open up their classrooms to parents and carers during or after school hours to encourage them to learn. We will continue to work with schools to engage with Adult Learning providers, and to utilise programmes such as the PDG, to deliver provision that impacts positively on both adults and children. We will support the provision of softer engagement activity as a means of attracting learners who might otherwise hesitate to get involved."

Studies show that parental involvement in school is more than four times as important as socio-economic class in influencing the academic performance of young people aged 16

Family Learning Works,
The Inquiry into Family Learning
in England and Wales – NIACE 2013

READ MORE

CASE STUDIES

PRACTITIONER GARETH REFLECTS ON HIS EXPERIENCES AS A PRACTITIONER

Gareth Thomas, Gypsies and Travellers Wales, Employment and Skills Officer. Gypsies and Travellers Wales have developed PROSPER, a 5 year Big Lottery funded project assisting Gypsies and Travellers to gain the skills and confidence needed to enter employment and further learning.



Gareth reflects on his experiences as a practitioner and his advice for successfully engaging and working with people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

READ MORE

“One thing I’m learning very quickly is that trust is a big factor and trust is earned.”

Gareth Thomas, Gypsies and Travellers Wales, Employment and Skills Officer.

ORGANISATION PROSPER PROJECT LAUNCHED IN 2017

Gypsies and Travellers Wales started working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Cardiff in 1981. In 2017 they launched an Employment and Skills Support Project, PROSPER. Here's an overview of the project and its impact to date.



READ MORE

WATCH

LEARNER EXPERIENCE LEEANNE’S JOURNEY TO ACHIEVING HER FOUNDATION DEGREE

Leeanne shares her learning experience, from community links to successfully completing her foundation degree.



READ MORE

“I went to school up until my GCSEs which back then in the 80s and 90s wasn’t something that a Gypsy child would do”.

Leeanne Morgan

ORGANISATION ENGAGEMENT AND TRAINING SUPPORT

Dynamix is a co-operative that offers engagement, facilitation and training support to community groups. Here’s a summary of a Welsh Government funded project working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities from 2014-17

READ MORE

SUMMARY



CASE STUDIES

LEARNER EXPERIENCE ROSE PROBERT FROM GCSE ENGLISH TO DEGREE

Inspire! Award Winner,
Rose shares her learning
journey



READ MORE

WATCH

ORGANISATION MONKTON SCHOOL IS A COMMUNITY HUB

Monkton Priory school
has used its Pupil
Development Grant to
engage parents and the
wider community



READ MORE

WATCH

ORGANISATION PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH THE LOCAL UNIVERSITY PROVIDES PROGRESSION ROUTES

University of Wales
Trinity St David have been
working with Monkton
Priory school to deliver
their foundation degree in
the community.



READ MORE

WATCH

LEARNER EXPERIENCE SHELLEY ARTHUR FROM SCHOOL VOLUNTEER TO MASTER'S DEGREE

Shelley started her
adult learning journey
by volunteering at her
daughter's school. She's
now doing her Master's
Degree.



READ MORE

ORGANISATION YOUTH FORUMS TO RAISE CONFIDENCE AND ASPIRATIONS

First Campus are working
with Travelling Ahead
to support the Gypsy,
Roma and Traveller Youth
Forums, helping to provide
opportunities and raise
aspirations.



READ MORE

ORGANISATION RESEARCHING THE BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION

Sussex University has been
researching the barriers
and challenges people from
GRT communities face in
accessing Higher Education
in their HEIM project.



WATCH

CASE STUDIES

ORGANISATION A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Trudy Aspinwall, Team Manager at Travelling Ahead provides some pointers for taking a strategic approach to engaging and providing services for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities



READ MORE

LEARNER EXPERIENCE GEMMA TURNBULL

Wanting to secure a better future for her family, Gemma started looking at learning opportunities in her local community and enrolled on a 10-week Humanities taster course.

READ MORE

WATCH



LEARNER EXPERIENCE MARTIN GALLAGHER A REFLECTION ON THE WIDER BENEFITS OF ADULT LEARNING

Travelling Ahead Engagement Officer, Martin Gallagher, reflects on his experience of learning as an adult and how it has provided him with the skills and confidence to challenge and make change.



READ MORE

“When I talk about education, it’s not just about going to school or getting a degree like I chose to do. It is about learning about things that matter, equipping yourself with the knowledge you want and need to face the world, and to educate others. My education has given me the knowledge and confidence to help other GRT people to speak up and get our voices heard in front of the people who have ‘power’, or through a different road, challenging laws and legislation, being a part of the politics, fighting for equality. Being able to do this is where I felt that having education behind me was worth it.”

Martin Gallagher
Learner and
Engagement Officer at
Travelling Ahead.

TOP TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICE

Top Tips are drawn from interviews and a survey with adult learning practitioners and learners from across Wales.

TIP: Long term engagement, trust and role models in the community

Practitioners and learners all emphasised the importance of long-term engagement and having role models in the community. It takes time to build up trust and relationships and to overcome barriers.

This is powerfully illustrated by the [Monkton Priory School](#) and the [PROSPER](#) project case studies.

"Other Traveller girls were doing the course and said it was really good, so I did it too"
– [Shelley Arthur case study](#).

TIP: Link workers - key people who have trust and connection with communities

Link workers who can build trust and connections with communities are often a building block for success. Good outcomes are often as a result of having access to an established, although often under-resourced, infrastructure and network, linking with specialist Gypsy, Roma, Traveller organisations and contact points in the community. In the [First Campus](#) project case study, they relied on their links with Travelling Ahead and project workers in the schools to reach the relevant young people.

The quotes below show some of the challenges when these connections are lost.

"...Previously we have provided essential skills sessions when various projects have been running. Without a project worker the sessions have just ceased to be viable - learners don't commit etc."

"It has been most successful when a development worker has been there to work closely with the communities and support the learners to attend lessons."

We have worked with Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities in the past but the links were lost with some of the link people and the community room was not available so are not currently working with them.

LONG TERM ENGAGEMENT, ROLE MODELS IN THE COMMUNITY, LINK WORKERS

TIP: Partnership working

We received consistent feedback on the importance of partnership working in order to reach and engage the communities. The [PROSPER](#) project demonstrates how this partnership working is essential to bring services into communities like specialist tutors for the 1-2-1 essential skills support. It also highlights the importance of establishing partnerships to help bridge learner engagement with wider services, for example the links with Business Wales.

TIP: Importance of non-accredited engagement activities and pathways progression

[Monkton Priory](#) and [PROSPER](#) case studies demonstrate the importance of initial engagement opportunities aligned to what the community want. This is also highlighted in Wales' Adult Learning Policy 2017 which encourages the use of engagement activity and 'hook' courses.

It is also important for progression pathways to be identified for learners,

[Leeanne's case study](#) shows how her learning journey took her from initial engagement with the Unity project and [Dynamix](#) through to local community learning and higher education.

TIP: Schools as a hub for adult family learning

The [Monkton Priory](#) case study is an excellent example of how the local school can be a hub for adult community learning. Monkton Priory have used their Pupil Development Grant to support a successful

engagement and learning programme for parents, carers and the wider community.

TIP: Getting the right venues

Many of the questionnaire respondents and case studies also stressed the importance of finding the right venues and how challenging this can be. It was generally agreed that having provision in the heart of the communities was really important, but venues weren't always set up for that.

TOP TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICE

TIP: "Need to offer sessions within the community rather than expecting them to travel to classes."

Some local authority Gypsy, Traveller sites have a **community room**, but these don't always have internet access, or aren't open at the right times.

"Another challenge has been running activities and support sessions on the sites. This is something that some community members feel strongly about and want. However, one site just isn't set up to do this effectively at all; there is a kind of porta cabin there which is very cold in the winter and doesn't have IT equipment or a Wi-Fi connection so trying to do something vital like online job search support or Universal Credit help is practically impossible."

TIP: Flexible and relevant provision directed by learners

We consistently heard from **practitioners** about the need to provide bite-sized, flexible, vocationally relevant and often bespoke provision for learners in their local community settings.

Successful examples of this include the Driving Test Theory courses being offered through the **PROSPER** project and links with Business Wales courses which aligns with those who are running or who want to run their own businesses. These were developed after engagement, discussion and agreement

with the community. [Shelley's case study](#) also highlights the importance of the vocationally relevant classroom assistant courses, which acted as a progression route from volunteering to work in her local school.

"You need to link to real work opportunities. It was really good to engage with the course while I was volunteering and working at the school. The course makes you better at your job". Learning providers also need to be flexible in their delivery and meet learners where they are. Gareth, from the PROSPER project explains how a basic skills group course didn't take off, but learners have engaged in 1-2-1 support with a local tutor.

PATHWAYS, TRUST, PROGRESSION ROUTES NON-ACCREDITED COURSES, SCHOOLS AS HUBS,

PARTNERSHIP, ENGAGEMENT, VENUES, FLEXIBLE DELIVERY, INVOLVEMENT, LISTEN, CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING, PRACTICE SHARE

TIP: Cultural awareness training

If you want to develop services and provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities then developing knowledge and understanding through cultural awareness training is a must.

Travelling Ahead, Gypsies and Travellers Wales and Romani Arts are involved in delivering this training in partnership with members of the communities. "Cultural awareness training - needs to be done at a number of levels with a number of different groups /services and with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities themselves across Wales.

It needs to be ongoing work over the long term not a quick fix - there is SO much unrealised potential"

TIP: Link with other practitioners doing similar work

Respondents to our questionnaire and case studies highlighted a patchy and fragile level learning provision aimed at Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Wales. Several practitioners shared the value of linking with others doing similar work and how this helps to share on-going practice and support each other.

"A network of interested and experienced practitioners/providers would help."

TIP: Take a strategic approach to engaging Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

Travelling Ahead emphasised the importance of organisations developing a strategic approach to this work and ensuring that senior staff and policies are aligned to support and enable practitioners on the ground.

SIGNPOSTING TO ORGANISATIONS

FOR FURTHER SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

Travelling Ahead READ MORE	Travelling Ahead is a Welsh project working with young people and families from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
Gypsies and Travellers Wales (Cardiff based) READ MORE	Gypsies and Travellers Wales aims to: • support Gypsies and Travellers to improve access to suitable accommodation, public services and employment skills. • We are committed to supporting Gypsies and Travellers to voice their needs and concerns, and to encouraging policies and practices which meet these needs. Work mostly in the Cardiff area but also more widely across Wales
Reaching Wider Partnerships First Campus (South East Wales) READ MORE Reaching Wider South West Wales READ MORE Reaching Wider North and Mid Wales READ MORE	The Reaching Wider Programme aims to increase higher education participation from targeted groups and communities in Wales by raising educational aspirations and skills, and creating innovative study opportunities and learning pathways to higher education.

Romani Arts READ MORE	We are a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community development organisation at heart. We are led by Gypsies and Travellers, we are about Gypsies and Travellers, we are for Gypsies and Travellers. We believe that the community can be developed to become fully accepted participants in mainstream society while still retaining their distinct culture and heritage.
Adult Learning Wales READ MORE	Providers of flexible adult learning provision across Wales.
Adult Learning Partnership Wales	The Adult Learning Partnership is a network of providers from local authorities and Further Education Colleges delivering community based adult learning. Delivery is focused on essential skills and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).
Working Wales READ MORE	Advice and information for learning and skills, employment and careers.
Learning and Work Institute Wales READ MORE	An independent policy, research and development organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. We research what works, influence policy, develop new ways of thinking, and help implement new approaches.

YOUR NEXT STEPS...

This toolkit is intended as a starting point to share ideas, what works and highlight some of the issues and barriers. We'd like to continue the conversation.

If you have thoughts, ideas, inspiration then tell us more.

If you have resources to share, examples of practice that works, hints and tips, please leave links and comments.

If you have developed provision or will be reviewing what you are doing to enable better access to adult learning for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities please share your plans.

FIND OUT MORE

FURTHER READING, REPORTS AND LINKS

Welsh Government
Enabling Gypsies Roma
and Travellers Plan 2018

READ MORE

Prosperity for all: The
National Strategy, taking
Wales forward 2017

READ MORE

Well-being of Future
Generations Act (2015)

READ MORE

Adult Learning in Wales -
2017

READ MORE

Gypsy and Traveller
Education: Engaging Families
- A Research Report 2014 -

READ MORE

Gypsy and Traveller
Education: Engaging Families
- A Research Report 2014

READ MORE

2008 guidance 'Moving
Forward – Gypsy Traveller
Education'
(due to be updated)

READ MORE

Estyn
The education of Gypsy
Traveller pupils: An update
on provision in secondary
schools - June 2011, Estyn

READ MORE

Provision for secondary
school-aged Gypsy, Roma
and Traveller pupils - April
2019

READ MORE

Travelling Ahead
Good Practice in Education:
Peer Research Project-
2014/15 -

READ MORE

The underrepresentation of
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
pupils in higher education
A report on barriers from
early years to secondary and
beyond – commissioned by
Kings College London 2017

READ MORE

Family Learning Works, The
Inquiry into Family Learning
in England and Wales –
NIACE 2013

READ MORE

GRT in Further and Higher
Education – Facebook Group

READ MORE

Travellers Times

READ MORE

THANKS

*We would like to say a
big thank you to all the
contributors to this Toolkit.
Especially the learners who
shared their stories:*

Leeanne Morgan

Shelley Arthur

Rose Probert

Martin Gallagher

Gemma Turnbull

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Travelling Ahead
Trudy Aspinwall

Gypsies, Travellers Wales
Gareth Thomas,
Jasmine Jones

Dynamix
Kate McCabe

Monkton Primary School
Shelley Morris

University of Wales
Trinity St David
Cindy Hunt

First Campus
Liz Trigg

Sussex University
HEIM project

Practitioners who responded
to our questionnaires

CASE STUDIES

PRACTITIONER

Gareth Thomas, Gypsies and Travellers Wales

I joined the team at Gypsies and Travellers Wales to work on their new project, funded by The Big Lottery, in November 2017.

PROSPER, Gypsies and Travellers Wales' employability project is aimed at providing skills for life and work for the Gypsies and Traveller communities in Cardiff. We are committed to develop literacy and digital literacy skills and to support people in finding and sustaining work and/or self-employment. To be effective these must be led by the needs of the Travelling communities.

People tell me that knocking on doors to ask people to come and do knitting classes won't work. Every person has individual needs which must be taken into account. It cannot be a 'one size fits all' project. Listening to people and delivering what they want is the biggest opportunity.

One thing I'm learning very quickly is that trust is a big factor; and trust is earned. You can't expect people to respond positively to a brand new project straight away. Just six months in I know I need to be consistent in my approach and that it's all about engagement; getting to know the communities, getting to know the families, listening and trying to deliver just what people want.

Education is not just about maths and English in this context, it's about being better equipped to deal with everyday realities and problems. Take energy/utilities costs for example: going online to find out the best energy prices is not easy for someone who doesn't have the skills or equipment needed yet getting a fair deal and saving money, these are the things that are important to people. Make the link.

Patience, trial and error and not being despondent are also important to me, especially if no-one turns up for a course. For example, we started running a driving theory for sixteen to seventeen-year olds and, sure enough, on week one no-one showed up. That was possibly down to the location of the course (at a local community centre not really used by the community) so we tried it on the Shirenewton site and we're up to 14 learners so far.

As the only employee on the project and the only full-time worker in the organisation, I can't do it on my own. The key to success is partnerships and I'm keen to develop as many as possible. I've been researching and want to implement family learning models to support parents and children and I've also begun contacting and meeting with primary and secondary schools in the area to explore the role schools can play in the community not just as a place of education but as a vital place to congregate and learn by sharing experiences.

There are differences, there are barriers, but we want people to be engaged and involved in this project and to cooperate to solve problems they may have. These are common aims and we must look at the similarities, not the differences, in order to break those barriers, achieve and make a difference in people's lives.

Key Advice:

- 1 Be prepared for disappointments along the way but accept that and keep going.
- 2 Think outside the box. Think of different ways of coming together.
- 3 Respect one another's space and take time to build up trust.
- 4 Being creative and 'flexible' is the only way forward.
- 5 Don't stick rigidly to preconceived ideas.
- 6 Offer help without expecting to take the lead. Listen and learn.

Key contact:

Gareth Thomas

Email: gareth.thomas@gtwales.org.uk

CASE STUDIES

ORGANISATION

Gypsies and Travellers Wales

PROSPER

What were your objectives?

Gypsies and Travellers Wales acquired five years Big Lottery funding for an employment and skills building project focussed on supporting Gypsies and Travellers living in the Cardiff area. Gypsies and Travellers Wales PROSPER Project started in November 2017 with one full time staff member who, in addition to designing and delivering all project activities, engages with the community in an outreach capacity providing mentoring support to individuals seeking employment or developing the skills needed for self-employment.

The project runs weekly activities including a job club, basic skills and driving theory lessons on both the local authority managed sites and in community locations. The project also supports the organisation's aims of improving services for Gypsies and Travellers by developing and delivering "An Introduction to Working with Gypsies and Travellers" training, available to local authority staff teams and other professionals. Who are the learners or participants? Gypsies and Travellers Wales has been working with the GRT community for nearly 40 years and has a number of ongoing projects

that are able to refer and connect learners and participants. The project works with people of all ages from Gypsy and Traveller communities in Cardiff. It works with those living on local authority and private sites as well as people living in private housing.

What is working well and why?

Having a consistent presence on the local authority sites has developed familiarity between project staff, community members and families in turn helping to increase staff awareness of community members' needs and how the project aims and activities can be matched accordingly.

This is important because some community members do not access opportunities available in the wider community e.g. through services such as Council run Hubs or the Job Centre. Taking this approach has improved engagement with the project and that in turn has produced positive outcomes for community members ranging from participation in family fun days to employing a community member to work on a youth project.

The Driving Theory lessons have proved very popular with young people because driving is both an important skill for economic purposes and a necessity for those living on sites with poor transport links. Since January 2018 the project has supported 9 learners to pass their tests. Staff are able to embed IT and literacy skills into every session. Several learners have continued to engage for further support (CV design, access to further education,

self-employment advice) and this in turn has helped promote the project to learners' families further developing trust with the community and further engagement. 2019 will see ongoing trialling of courses around LGV and PCV Driving Theory Test support which is particularly useful for those running small businesses and needing to drive larger vehicles.

Young people who have successfully engaged with these courses have become advocates for the project amongst other community members.

"Word of mouth is your best friend"

The PROSPER project also offers Flexible 1-2-1 tuition for those who have identified a need to develop their literacy and IT skills. Initially developed to be group sessions, when this didn't take off, the 1-2-1 sessions were introduced and have been much more successful, they are tailored around individual's needs, respond to the learner's pace and respect their privacy.

Partnership working

Gypsies and Travellers Wales PROSPER project has made links with other organisations that are already working with the community and has also acted as a bridge for learners to other mainstream organisations.

Flying Start run a playgroup on the larger Gypsy Traveller site and already have great engagement with parents and families. They provide work experience placements and opportunities for community members that the PROSPER project

has been able to link with. This has helped to develop working relationships and connections and they have shared venue space. The PROSPER project has also linked learners through Flying Start to accredited Agored Cymru provision.

The project has linked with **Adult Learning Wales**, who have provided materials for learners, currently offering an entry level qualification on Universal Credit and Budgeting. The PROSPER project employs a tutor who is able to provide very flexible support to learners at their own pace. The PROSPER project is now starting to look at other units and qualifications as staff develop their understanding of what learning providers can offer and what the learners in the community want.

The PROSPER project has also forged good relationships with **Business Wales** and learners have attended their introductory business start-up courses - "Taking the Plunge".

Through working in partnership, the organisations have been able to reduce the bureaucracy and barriers for learners. For example, they have named contact points at Business Wales which can help by-pass barriers such as online enquiry forms. Business Wales have also sent role models into the community to work with the project and spoken directly to community members who want to start businesses.

Although many think that GRT communities follow more traditional gender roles, this project has found women wanting to set up their own businesses and taking up the Driving Theory Test courses. It is important

not to make too many assumptions and spend time getting to know individuals to find out what people will be interested in rather than risk missing out because of outdated stereotypes.

The PROSPER project has partnered with the Learning and Work Institute, accessing funding to run engagement activities on both sites during Adult Learner's Week in 2018. These were very popular with the children on site which in turn was a great way to engage parents.

What was the impact on the learners/participants?

Gypsies and Travellers Wales have been delighted with the success of PROSPER to date, it has seen confidence levels rise in individuals and an increased willingness to engage in activities outside of their GRT communities.

The impact is that the wider community sees this, and it starts a ripple effect with more community members taking part.

"In a support role you're dealing with individuals with their own needs, motivation levels and complex lives so it's been about finding a way to fit the project's aims around individuals and that means building up relationships which requires time, patience and flexibility in how we run activities. That this project has been funded for 5 years makes it less challenging."

Main challenges

- Balancing the needs for delivering project outcomes to satisfy funders against the needs to first build trust and relationships with communities and families which takes time.
- It also takes time to build
- It also takes time to build up relationships with other organisations.
- Running activities and support sessions on the sites can be challenging as they don't always have the right equipment or facilities.
- Discrimination and racism from the settled community starts in schools and continues into every element of Gypsy and Traveller life.

Key contact:
Gareth Thomas
Email: gareth.thomas@gtwales.org.uk

CASE STUDIES

LEARNER EXPERIENCE

Leeanne Morgan

I grew up in England on Traveller sites. My mum didn't go to school, so she always wanted me to go to school and have what she didn't have. She always said that there was nothing worse than receiving a letter and thinking, 'What does it say?'

I went to school up until my GCSEs which, back then in the 80s and 90s, wasn't something that a Gypsy child would do. I faced all kinds of prejudices from my own community with people saying, 'Oh look at little school girl' and mocking me. In school it was worse from my teachers rather than my peers as they'd say 'Why do you want to learn? You are not going to do anything with your life. You aren't going to be a doctor, you are just going to clean and have children.'

As a child, back in those days, you were taught to look up to your teachers and even your parents were scared of the teachers. If somebody tells you that you're stupid for long enough, then you tend to believe it. Their idea of Traveller education was to give you pictures of horses and wagons and chickens to colour in.

I struggled at secondary school and left having barely passed my GCSEs. In Wales I did all the usual jobs you do being a seasonal worker and then I heard about the Unity Project through Facebook and I thought 'I'll have a go at that, why not? In for a penny, in for a pound.' I attended the ten sessions of the course and, although everyone believed I was confident, I really wasn't. You get very good at acting and pretending to be someone you are not when you have to be. Confidence was there on the outside but never on the inside. The Dynamix training helped a lot and lead onto me doing some training sponsored by the Welsh Government. With each course, my confidence grew. Although it had taken twenty something years for me to realise that I wasn't stupid, at last I thought I can maybe do the same things as other people.

"I only became interested in education again about five years ago after getting involved with Pembrokeshire Council's Unity Project which aimed to enable Gypsies and Travellers to access and develop services."

When funding for that project ran out, I heard about a degree course, but I was very sceptical about my ability to do it. I retreated and turned back to the ten-year-old school girl again, crying and shaking, thinking that teachers wouldn't give someone like me their full support and I'd just look like a fool again.

But I was determined to carry on and sometime later, the opportunity arose to do a Foundation degree in Inclusive Studies for Teaching Assistants with a few of the girls, run by the University of Wales Trinity St David. The Unity Project said that one of their staff would do the course alongside me and support me. A couple of other community members were also supposed to follow the degree course at the same time as me but, unfortunately, they felt it wasn't for them at that time and dropped out. I wasn't totally convinced that I could do it, but I had to give it a try.

Although it felt lonely, I can honestly say it was the best, yet hardest, thing I've ever done because I've got two kids and a husband at home to look after too. To complete a Foundation degree course, juggle home life and a social life (Well, I didn't have one of those!) is very hard, but I'm very pleased that projects such as these are able to reach out and build trust with the Gypsy and Traveller communities. Taking the first step is never easy, and trust can be lost by a thoughtless slip of the tongue.

Additional notes

- The Unity project ran out of funding and is no longer running.
- You can find out more about Dynamix, another organisation that supported Leeanne in a separate [case study](#)

Key Advice

1. To succeed you need ambition, to put in the leg work and accept that it's not going to be easy.
2. Have confidence in yourself and believe that whatever the circumstances, you can do it.
3. Don't let bullies or prejudice put you off, those people lose, you win.
4. Tutors and courses that are based in the communities themselves have a much better chance of success.
5. Free creché facilities make a huge difference to many women.
6. Work placements have sometimes led onto employment. It has a good knock-on effect.
7. The Education Director of my course said, 'We're not here to judge the Gypsy and Traveller community, we're here to help them get on in life.' I think that's great!



CASE STUDIES

ORGANISATION

Tackling the tensions training programme

Dynamix is a community cooperative organisation based in Swansea. It runs bespoke training and consultations that put those involved right at the centre of what they do.

This was an Equalities and Inclusion project funded by the Welsh Government. The project ran from 2014-2017.

The aim was to work collaboratively with Gypsies and Travellers to develop an innovative, participative course for professionals in housing, social services and health in understanding & preventing discrimination of Gypsies and Travellers.

The project was based on the following principle

The best way to tackle discrimination is to enable the people experiencing discrimination to bring about change. It is better to do things with people than it is to do things for people.

Partnership working

The project worked with Travelling Ahead, Torfaen Traveller Education Service and the Unity Project to recruit three groups of Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsies and Travellers to participate

41 people participated in 5 'train the trainers' courses in Cardiff, Pembrokeshire, Torfaen, Swansea, Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Wrexham and Flintshire. They included Gypsies and Travellers and their support staff. 94% reported that their confidence to deliver training had improved and 94% said that their skills to deliver training had improved.

The train the trainers courses ran over four days and participants were helped with transport and childcare costs. Key workers from partner organisations also attended to offer additional support and encouragement.

At the end of the project, the training packs were handed over to Travelling Ahead, who continue to work with many of the original participants to deliver the training.

Evaluating the train the trainers course

Of the Gypsies and Travellers who attended, 100% said it was exceptionally participative and enjoyable, 100% said they had learnt an exceptional amount of new

training methods, 100% said they felt exceptionally happy about delivering training and wanted to continue to be involved in future and 100% said they have had an exceptional level of say in the design of the course.

About training the professionals

22 courses were delivered to 329 professionals in housing, health and social services about Understanding Gypsies and Travellers.

Recommendations

This training course should continue to be made available to many professional and community groups in Wales. Partner organisations should continue to receive support to deliver this training. New opportunities should be created for Gypsies and Travellers to co-deliver these courses.

This model also works with other groups

Dynamix are using a similar model currently working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees to develop training for primary and secondary school staff and pupils.

Key contact:
Kate McCabe,
Projects & Development Officer
Email: kate@dynamix.coop

BACK TO PAGE

LEARNER EXPERIENCE

Rose Probert

I come from a Gypsy Traveller background and although my initial education was a positive one, I did lack confidence and had to focus on looking after my disabled brother. So, I left school with low GCSE grades and it wasn't until I was in my mid-twenties that I had a second chance at education. I took the opportunity of supporting Gypsy Traveller pupils in a secondary school, all of the staff were very supportive and they saw potential in me and encouraged me to complete a NVQ Level 3 Teaching Assistant qualification. I was pregnant with my daughter Olivia at the time of completing the qualification.

I guess my opportunities of getting back into learning fully took off when I joined adult learning classes at Monkton Priory Community School,

studying during the evenings. My first GCSE was in English, I got a B grade and from then on, I was hooked on learning!

My next step was a degree in Inclusive Studies in Education. I didn't think I was capable to complete such a high qualification, but I did and graduated with 1st Class Honours. I took a year out and then decided I wanted to specifically train in Additional Learning Needs, as this fits the career path I now have. I completed a Post Graduate Certificate for Additional Learning Needs which I passed with Distinction. I've been working in this profession for 18 years now and I've had the opportunity to progress.

I'm currently working as an Access Learning Manager in a school where I'm also Head of House, encouraging 200 plus pupils to succeed under my mentoring role. I share this role with a colleague, and I love the work.

Through my love of learning I was nominated for an Inspire! Award which I won in 2016. Since winning this award it has opened many doors to opportunities. I've been encouraged by many special people throughout my learning journey and I've taken the role of encouraging people to go back into further education in my community. If you are thinking about your next steps, I'd recommend looking at what is going on in your local community – take a friend if you are a little apprehensive. Adult learning has a lot to offer. I'm proof that anyone can succeed if you only believe in yourself. Everybody is in the same boat, give it ago, because who knows where it may lead.

“Through my love of learning I was nominated for an Inspire! Award which I won in 2016. Since winning this award it has opened many doors to opportunities.”

CASE STUDIES

ORGANISATION

Launch: Monkton Priory Primary School

Monkton Priory Primary School has been on a mission to engage parents and the wider community in adult learning for many years with outstanding results. The school has not stood still but has moved forward, innovating and developing provision which has been life changing for many.

In 2012 Launch Adult Learning was created by Headteacher, Shelley Morris, she says, "Our mission was to provide adult education in the community. The project has a clear purpose – achieving the best outcomes, raising attainment and aspirations for children within the setting and this goes hand in hand with providing opportunities for learning, skills and qualifications for parents."

Accredited courses are available and designed to remove barriers so that parents and the wider community can gain the confidence and skills to find employment. The school operates in an environment where 50% of children are entitled to free school meals, 40% of children have additional learning needs, 30% of children are from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

An Adult Learning co-ordinator was employed by the school to deliver Launch – parents and the wider community were asked about the courses they wanted and considered what local employers were looking for, to enable some of the barriers of getting into work to be addressed. As a result, Site Safety training has been a key part of the offer – attracting many men in the community and giving them access to one of the largest employers in the area.

The project has been focused on finding solutions to create opportunities. One of the main barriers to learning for students was child care. Launch now offer a free crèche with every course, however this highlighted a shortage of quality crèche workers available. Rather than let this stop developments, Launch applied to become a learning centre which enabled them to write and deliver accredited courses, tailor made for the community's needs. Kellie Bellmaine is the co-ordinator of Launch, she said "I gained the qualifications required to become a tutor and wrote an accredited crèche worker course, which included the safeguarding qualification. We now have a pool of qualified crèche workers, and they've accessed employment not only with us, but with other partner organisations."

A key aim of the Launch offer is around progression for students, and feedback reflected that this was also something the community wanted. A significant and hugely successful relationship is with the University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD). Outreach delivery means that since 2012 students can study for a Foundation degree in Inclusive

education at the school. This was so successful that students can now study for a further one year and gain a BA Degree in Inclusive Education.

Lisa Wilson is a parent who has accessed the courses, she has eight children and is a grandmother to three. She says, "I was approached to start a Foundation degree at the school. I could not even turn on a computer, but I was booked onto a First Steps course and I took another course to improve my IT skills. I have not studied since leaving school but felt it was time that I did something for myself and to be a positive role model to my children and grandchildren." After gaining the Foundation degree, Lisa graduated with a BA in 2016.

Four-year groups now run in the evenings, since 2012, 79 students have gained a Foundation degree, 53 students have gained a full BA degree, with 18 of these graduates identifying as GRT (Gypsy Roma Traveller). This innovation means that the school now has seven Learning Support Assistants working at the school with degrees and at the end of 2016 Launch were approached by UWTSD to offer another part-time degree programme in Youth and Community Work.

"Learning Together is our school motto. The children see that education doesn't finish when you become an adult, seeing their parents and other adults studying sends a powerful message about the importance of learning, and has a hugely positive impact on the lives of both the child and the adult."

BACK TO PAGE

CASE STUDIES

ORGANISATION

First Campus, Supporting Youth Forums

First Campus have worked with Travelling Ahead since 2015 to support the South Wales Regional Youth Forums. The Forums allow young travellers to get together to talk about current issues that they face, holding them at University is a subtle way of raising awareness of the facilities in education on the doorstep. Young people from Newport, Torfaen, Blaenau-Gwent, Cardiff and Merthyr have attended.

The young people organise the workshops within the Forums themselves, First Campus has contributed in the form of 'University Life' talks, campus tours and taster sessions e.g. Animation. Sessions have included Q&A with Jeff Cuthbert (Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent Police) and John Griffiths (Assembly Member).

This year, they are planning to involve Able Radio in Cwmbran, and offer the young people the opportunity to take part in workshops around making jingles and broadcasting.

Who has been involved?

There's been a mixed gender and age range from 11-18 year olds, with most of the young people being around 14 years.

Numbers of participants can vary but they usually get about 12-15 people attend the forums.

They also work with a smaller planning group of 2-4 young people

How has it gone?

The young people have enjoyed the activities- one person has gone on to 6th form now and has aspirations to be a teacher. A key worker at school has played a vital role in linking to First Campus, and to organise a tour of the campus and have a chat about teaching.

Partnership work is key

This project is reliant on key organisations and individuals working in partnership together. Travelling Ahead - are ultimately responsible for running the forums Local Authority key workers, based at school, they engage the students to get involved in the projects. These roles are absolutely crucial as they have the trust and relationship with the young people.

First Campus - Host the forums in the south east and liaise with relevant agencies, academics and student ambassadors to deliver the programme of activities that the young people request

Techniquet - have provided workshop and taster activities

Winding Snake Animation - have provided workshop and taster activities

Able Radio - are lined up as a future partner to develop community radio sessions

How was the project/ initiative funded?

Mixed funding. Welsh Government pay Traveling Ahead to run the Forums. First Campus provide the extra bits and staff time through Reaching Wider Funding

What have been the key outcomes?

- Key workers feedback that attendance and engagement in school is improving year on year, says that they have made really good progress over a long period of time
- They are building trust
- Finding progression routes for some of the young people
- Providing a gentle introduction on the young people's terms
- Data capture - GRT Communities are not an identified priority group for First Campus. However, First Campus will report on their engagement with GRT communities as a 'hard to reach' group within their WIMD40 target.

Challenges

Attendance can be varied, and consistency of attendance, different young people engaging each time.

Key recommendations

- You need a softly, softly approach similar to engaging with care experienced young people
- Deliver a good balance of what they want - led by the young people at the pace that's right for them, they are in control of it.
- We need GTR role models who can share their learning experiences.
- Making learning accessible to them, that they can come back at a later stage
- May not engage or continue to engage at the moment, but we are sowing the seed and hopefully make them realise that they can come back to education at a later stage, when they are adults, and they will have had a positive experience.

Key contact

Liz Trigg

Email: liz.trigg@southwales.ac.uk

First Campus is the Reaching Wider Partnership covering South East Wales and is funded by HEFCW.



BACK TO PAGE

CASE STUDIES

ORGANISATION

Foundation and BA Degree Inclusive Education

Summary

University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD) has been delivering a Foundation and BA Degree in Inclusive Education in a flexible way in community settings to widen access for new groups of adult learners. Offering a progression pathway for Adult Community Learning.

The initiative has run from 2011 offering outreach programmes in various venues in:

- Newtown
- Aberystwyth
- Pembroke - Monkton School
- Carmarthen
- Swansea – St Thomas School

Partnership working is key

In Pembroke the project worked closely with Monkton school and the Launch project which runs adult education classes from the school. They are key in engaging adult learners and supporting them to progress to the Foundation degree.

There is various partnership funding to progress learners to Higher Education. Learners can then apply for bursaries and loans to support their course fees.

- Between 2011- 2018 – 79 learners engaged on a Foundation degree
- 18 participants from a GTR community
- Of these, 53 went on to study BA / 18 from GTR community
- 1 Progressed to PG study
- Mostly women of all ages

Outcomes

Employment outcomes

Learners from the GTR communities have gone on to the following employment:

- Head of Special Needs Unit in Secondary School
- Adult Education Officer
- Coordinator of Priory Project (Monkton School)
- Flying Start (Monkton School)
- LSAs – Reception class – Year 6 (Monkton School)

Impact

- Confidence
- Qualifications
- Employment

Challenges and successes

- Many GRT communities don't want to disclose their backgrounds
- Dependant on community infrastructure, a proper hub for learning at Monkton Priory School was established with funding and creché facilities crucial.

Key recommendations

- Building trust takes time, it's all about personal (not institutional) relationships.
- Key staff are crucial and act as the lynch pin in the community.
- It's all about partnership working

Key contact:

Cindy Hunt,
Programme Director FD/BA
Inclusive Education
Email: c.hunt@uwtsd.ac.uk

CASE STUDIES

LEARNER EXPERIENCE

Shelley Arthur

Shelley is currently studying for a master's degree in Equity and Diversity in Society with University of Wales, Trinity St David. She has aspirations to continue her studies with a PhD.

Raised in Pembroke Dock, her and her brother grew up with her mum, who is from a Traveller background. Shelley has stayed in the area as an adult and her 10-year-old daughter goes to the local school. Shelley left at 16, with poor GCSE results, she went on to college, but left after a few weeks, met her first husband and was married at 18 and had a daughter within the first year.

After her relationship broke down, she found herself as a single mother, with low confidence and struggling to live on benefits.

Her opportunity came when she stated volunteering at her daughter's school. The school (Pembroke Dock Primary) was very welcoming and encouraged parents to get involved. After a while they offered the volunteers to take up their NVQ level 2 which was being delivered at nearby Pembrokeshire College.

Her NVQ in Supporting Teaching and Learning, then led to her getting a job at the school as a Learning Support Assistant.

After successfully completing the NVQ, she was made aware of the Foundation degree in Inclusive Education and that it was open to all.

Shelley went along to a taster day held at the school. She describes meeting Cindy, the programme Director, and says she was key to her signing up for the degree. "She was so welcoming, and didn't come across as superior at all, and she made everyone feel they could do it. Me and Cindy hit it off straight way, that was key."

Shelley knew some of the other learners who were also doing the course and engaged with Monkton school. "Other traveller girls were doing the course too and said it was really good, so I did it too."

The Foundation degree was delivered from the local Monkton Priory School in the evenings. It was important to her that she was able to continue working while she was studying. After this, she continued with the 'top up' to get the full BA Degree, which was also delivered at the school.

Impact of learning on Shelley's life

"It's completely changed my life, I was living on the dole with no job and now I'm looking at jobs that I'd never have dreamed of."

Her daughter who is now ten, has grown up seeing her mum studying and Shelley feels really proud to be a role model for her and raising her aspirations for the future. "My daughter has watched me succeed."

"Doing the initial degree has given me the confidence to go on to do the Master's". The Master's degree is delivered in Carmarthen on a Saturday and has different tutors but is still delivered by Trinity St David.

Shelley thinks that what made the difference for her in taking the first steps into learning, was being motivated for her and her daughter and also seeing that others from her community were also involved.

She has experienced lots of support from her family and community.

"My mum left school at 11 and struggled all her life with 3 or 4 jobs, she's really supportive and proud of me."

Shelley would like to continue her studies and start a PhD after her Master's degree. She currently works as a Learning Support Assistant within a specialist unit at a mainstream school. She's passionate about working with children with additional needs and would ultimately like to work in an Advisory role across the County.

Shelley's top tips

- Understand people's differences
- Link to real work opportunities. It was really good to engage with the course, while I was volunteering and working at the school - the course makes you better at your job
- Having others as role models

What has helped her along the way

- The thought of the graduation at the end and her daughter seeing her cross the stage
- The support of her mum and wider family members
- A What's App group – for students and tutor, having really good accessible tutors who understood her

“My mum left school at 11 and struggled all her life with 3 or 4 jobs, she's really supportive and proud of me.”

CASE STUDIES

ORGANISATION

Taking a strategic approach to engaging Gypsy, Roma Traveller communities

It is important that organisations address the engagement of Gypsy Roma Traveller communities at a strategic level within their institutions; a commitment to this work and 'buy-in' from senior managers are crucial if it is going to be effective

Here are the key recommendations from **Travelling Ahead** where they draw on good practice from their own experience and other work carried out by education providers

Key Recommendations

1. Have an organisation plan for this work and ensure that working with Gypsy, Roma Travellers are identified as a priority within appropriate plans
2. Allocate resources (time as well as any financial resources) and embed within key staff roles at a strategic as well as a practitioner level
3. Set targets and monitor progress
4. Embed within the organisation's other policies and procedures, for example review your equalities and diversity policies, procedures for reporting discrimination, complaints, grievances
5. Consider how inclusive, representative and welcoming your courses/spaces/publicity materials/events/curriculum and course content are for students from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
6. Train staff at all levels
7. Involve and engage representatives from the communities within your planning and monitoring at all stages

“Nothing should be developed for community members without community members”

Key contact:

Trudy Aspinwall

Email: Trudy.Aspinwall@tgpcymru.org.uk

CASE STUDIES

LEARNER EXPERIENCE

Gemma Turnbull

Gemma left school at 16 without any qualifications. Gemma's grandmother was from a traveling community and her mother left school at 14. She had a first child at the age of 16 and went onto have a further three children.

Wanting to secure a better future for her family, Gemma started looking at learning opportunities in her local community and enrolled on a 10-week Humanities taster course at a primary school in Pembroke Dock, delivered by the Department of Adult Continuing Education (DACE), Swansea University. Following this course, she decided to enrol on their 2-year Part-time Foundation Certificate in Humanities, which was also offered at the school.

Gemma is also the legal guardian for two nieces and a nephew, she says, "At first, I worried about how I would cope being a student with so much responsibility but I quickly decided that I had come so far and I really wanted to make something of myself and make the children proud of me."

After successfully completing the Foundation Certificate, she enrolled on the part-time Humanities Degree at the Dept of Adult Continuing Education (DACE) at Swansea University. "My studies have changed my life! I will admit that being a student and mum has been challenging at times, but it is not impossible! During my studies, I was diagnosed with dyslexia and dyspraxia and have been able to access a range of support and services to assist me during my studies."

Gemma's studies have raised her aspirations to become a primary school teacher. Following graduation, she plans to gain GCSEs in English and Maths to enable her to apply for a Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). Her studies have inspired her and given her the confidence to apply to be a parent governor and she was successfully elected to this post.

A film about Gemma's story is here

WATCH

Key contact:
**Department of Adult Continuing
Education (DACE)**
Swansea University
01792 602211

"At first, I worried about how I would cope being a student with so much responsibility but I quickly decided that I had come so far and I really wanted to make something of myself and make the children proud of me."

BACK TO PAGE