

## **What is the pledge?**

The 'GTRSB into HE' pledge has been developed by Buckinghamshire New University in collaboration with a range of experts and organisations including the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) and The Advisory Council for Education of Romany and Other Travellers (ACERT). The overall aim of the pledge is to encourage a commitment to data monitoring, supporting and focusing interventions on our students who come from the following ethnic and cultural backgrounds; Gypsy, Traveller, Romany, Showmen and Boater (GTRSB). Through this work, there will be a focus on raising the aspirations of these students and highlighting progression opportunities, with a particular focus on Higher Education.

Recent [research](#) carried out by Go Higher West Yorkshire undertook focus groups and interviews with 22 young people from Romany Gypsy, Irish Traveller and Roma communities. The findings showed that many young people from these ethnic and cultural backgrounds have far lower educational attainment and progression than their peers due to multiple factors which include; a lack of understanding of formal education throughout their communities with many being the first in their family to take part in 'formal' education. There is also an emphasis on classic gender roles, often with young males being expected to continue with the work their families do and females expected to look after the home and take on caring responsibilities. There are many other factors which have an impact on students attainment and progression, with many young people having experienced bullying and racism. In regards to progression into HE, [research](#) put forward by Buckinghamshire New University has shown that approximately 3- 4% of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population (18- 30 years old) access Higher Education in comparison to 43% of 18-30 year olds in the general UK population (Greenfields, 2019).

We aim to work collaboratively across the Luminare Education Group and draw on the knowledge we have across school, FE and HE provisions. University Centre Leeds will also be committing to the pledge and we will work closely together to ensure we meet the objectives of the pledge across Leeds City College and the University Centre provision. We will also be working closely with Leeds City Academy, who have developed successful work and relationships with their romany students and the wider community.

Once we have committed to the pledge we will be invited to take part in 'light touch' feedback and monitoring sessions one year after committing, and annually thereafter, where we can review progress and discuss what we have learnt with other institutions.

## **What are we committing to?**

The pledge is split into four main categories:

1. Data Collection
2. Organisational and Institutional Culture
3. Outreach
4. Inclusion, Celebration and Commemoration

### **How will we commit to these areas?**

#### *Data Collection*

We aim to focus our research and development on two key areas of data collection.

1. Identification- how many of our students feel confident disclosing that they are from a GTRSB background and how we can encourage students to identify as being from GTRSB backgrounds. Students can currently only identify as 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' on our student enrolment forms.

*Currently, in the academic year 21/22 0.1% of students have identified as being from a 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' background, this is 16 students.*

2. Destinations- what are our GTRSB students progressing onto after college?

Aims

- Begin conversations around the enrolment form in order to review how we can better diversify our 'ethnicity' category options to be more reflective of GTRSB backgrounds.
- Review destinations data

*Organisational and Institutional Culture*

Working closely with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team we will aim to promote and achieve a culture where being of GTRSB background is understood and celebrated. The Progression Officer and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Project Coordinator at Leeds City College, will work closely with Leeds City Academy to understand and learn from the positive and successful institutional culture that they have built for their romany students.

Aims

- Begin conversations around how GTRSB culture and heritage can be integrated more throughout the curriculum.
- Include GTRSB students in EDI policies.
- Organise CPD sessions for staff to enhance knowledge and understanding around GTRSB cultures and the barriers students may face with educational attainment and progression
- Work with the Student Enrichment team to organise enrichment opportunities for GTRSB students ● We will begin discussions around potential designated leads in this area

*Outreach*

Aims

- We will create and implement an FE outreach programme which will be a collaborative project between Leeds City College, Leeds City Academy and the University Centre Leeds. The aim of this programme is to raise the confidence and aspirations of our GTRSB students as well as creating consistent support throughout the transition from school to FE and FE to HE. Our main focus to begin with will be the transition from school to college.
- We will work closely with Leeds City Academy to understand the work they have previously carried out with these groups of students and use 'lessons learnt' to inform the outreach activities we organise. Leeds City Academy will identify a group of students we can work with in order to begin building relationships with this group of young people and to use the 'learner voice' to inform our outreach work.

*Inclusion, Celebration and Commemoration*

Working closely with the EDI team, Student Enrichment Team and Curriculum areas we aim to ensure the culture of GTRSB students is celebrated and acknowledged throughout Leeds City College.

#### Aims

- We will include national days of celebration and commemoration within the Student Life team and Marketing teams calendar's so that these can be marked throughout Leeds City College, in collaboration with University Centre Leeds.