SUBMISSION FROM NHS HIGHLAND

1. Our contact with Gypsy/Travellers

NHS Highland is committed to achieving better quality, safer and more efficient services for everyone in Highland. We have developed a robust plan that seeks to engage directly with people from all protected groups, and aims to jointly develop health-related equality outcomes that deliver better health, focusing on issues such as access to services, and patient experience.

We have forged sound relations with our partner organisations, such as education and housing, in order to offer a joined-up service that meets the specific needs of Gypsy/Travelling people. We have developed joint programmes, such as early years' workers, and play at home groups.

We have named Health Visitors who carry responsibility and accountability for ensuring the voice of Gypsy/Travellers is heard, and their health needs met. This is a pro-active service that outreaches to Gypsy/Traveller sites, ensuring that they are able to benefit from health programmes, such as the HPV vaccinations for teenage girls, and the immunisation programmes for babies and young children.

2. Any policies or practice guidelines relating to Gypsy/Travellers

We have policies and guidelines in place that seek to actively promote inclusion, and address discrimination, such as;

*NHS Highland Accessibility Guidance for Staff; Breaking Barriers and Building Confidence for all our Communities and Staff,* and

*Best Practice Guidelines* (for health workers who support Gypsy/Travellers)

All of our policies, procedures, guidelines and frameworks, undergo a robust Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment, and we are developing this process to include an audit procedure that can support monitoring and evaluation.

3. Any specific training or awareness raising we undertake in relation to Gypsy/Travellers

Equality and Diversity training is mandatory for all NHS Highland staff, and must be undertaken at least once every 3 years. This training covers the issues that relate to being part of a Gypsy/Traveller community, and seeks to equip staff with the knowledge and skills that can enable them to promote inclusion and tackle discrimination. It is also part of the induction process for every worker in NHS Highland.

4. What we have done to address any difficulties Gypsy/Travellers have in accessing services

We have committed to ensuring that the actions outlined in points 1, 2 & 3 are on-going, and we are developing transparent procedures in order to evaluate and monitor impact, and evidence mainstreaming.

NHS Highland has specific policies in place to ensure the accessibility, quality and safety of our services, and these have been rigorously assessed for equality impact on protected groups.
We have developed a robust data system that enables us to capture the ethnicity of every patient who undergoes an episode of care in NHS Highland. This is monitored monthly for completeness, and is being developed to enable us to inform planning and performance of truly patient-centred services.

We will continue to improve the quality of our services and the healthcare experience for everyone in Highland, through meaningful partnerships that represent true inclusion and participation.

Lynda Forrest
Policy Development Manager
NHS Highland
12 July 2012