



*Final Report*

*E-LAMP (Strand  
B)*

*The Back on Track  
Project*



*Compiled and written  
by:-*

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## *Executive summary*

*One of the major educational challenges in work with Traveller families is to improve attainment, achievement and access to education. These challenges increase at secondary education level, as many Traveller children do not transfer; even where they do retention is problematic and disengagement high.*

*From the start the ELAMP Strand B project was supported by the (then) DCSF and coordinated via NATT+ to explore the use of an ICT-based learning approach which has the potential to re-engage young Travellers at Key Stage 4 (14+). A specific learning framework has been developed which enables learners to achieve up to three 'Wider Key Skills' qualifications; accredited by ASDAN.*

*The overall aim of the project has been to work with local Traveller Education Services (TES) to provide new opportunities for engagement and increase aspirations by focussing on the vocational and personal interests of young Travellers. ELAMP Strand B began in September 2006 and over three years in excess of 20 TES became involved, supporting over 100 learners. Evaluation of the work indicated that up to 75% of the young learners who engaged with the scheme achieved at least one Wider Key Skill qualification; this success pattern was very dependent on levels of support provided by each of the TES partners.*

*Considering that young learners on this programme are some of the most vulnerable in our education system, it has been very encouraging to observe their progress. As well as gaining qualifications there is clear evidence of improvements in literacy and ICT skills, and in skills relating to planning, reflection and handling advice. Most young Travellers have found the project both enjoyable and rewarding. There have been remarkable improvements in self-esteem and self-confidence and positive levels of re-engagement in learning. The project has also improved access to important information regarding post-16 educational choices, which in turn has increased aspirations.*

*This report is based on the 'Back on Track' initiative that was part of the final year of the ELAMP Strand B pilot. This initiative began in September 2009 and has involved just 12 of the TES partners, who between them have supported 50 learners. These partners were given funding to secure a consistent one-day-per-week staffing commitment. The report will discuss the cohort, their educational contexts and continued levels of achievement. It draws from the perspective of both tutors and learners and includes six case-studies which were the outcome of visits to different TES and interviews with tutors and young Travellers alike.*

*As this report concludes, the Back on Track initiative has confirmed the value of the approach where dedicated staff time is set aside. Post-16 access and qualification gains improved; two thirds of young participants who completed the year will have obtained at least two Wider key Skills qualifications by December 2010. From September 2010, as ELAMP draws to a close, the approach will be taken over by Ormiston Education, a Charitable Trust. This report highlights lessons learnt and good practice, which hopefully will inform the continuing work of the Trust.*

*Kate D'Arcy (October, 2010).*

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## **ELAMP (Strand B) and the ‘Back on Track’ initiative (2009-10)**

E-LAMP was set up in 2004 as a way of exploring the use of ICT to enable Traveller Education Services (TES) to support Traveller learners. Strand B of the project has been running since September 2006 and was a response to the challenge of making effective provision for older Traveller pupils who are on the fringes of schooling or have left altogether. Its aim has been to explore the potential of an ICT-based approach to help re-engage these young learners and to build bridges for their educational and occupational futures.

The initiative was supported by the (then) Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and coordinated via the National Association of Teachers of Travellers and other professionals (NATT+). It has targeted young Travellers at Key Stage 4 (14+) and been based on the use of the Wider Key Skills framework. Learners could work at Level 1 or level 2 in terms of GCSE equivalence, and to gain qualifications they had to complete a series of ‘challenges’ which were chosen to reflect vocational and personal interests. The original project also incorporated a specially designed virtual learning environment (VLE) and each learner was provided with a laptop as well as internet access.

A more detailed introduction to the project can be found in the annual report for 2008-09 which is entitled ‘Building Bridges for Traveller Children’ and is available on the NATT+ website <http://www.natt.org.uk/elamp/index.html>. This previous report describes the overall positive progress of the initiative but notes that evaluations had identified two critical concerns. The first of these was poor connectivity which had hampered progress for some learners as they couldn’t always access materials from the VLE when they needed them. This was successfully resolved by introducing a disk-based (back-up) alternative so that learners also had off-line copies of all materials.

The second relates to the importance of ensuring that tutors had sufficient time to provide effective support, as well as helping their young learners to explore Further Education (FE) provision and other educational/vocational avenues. Project guidelines recommended that tutors should have one day per week for this role; half a day for face-to-face contact with their learners and half a day for preparation and assessment. However tutorial support was sometimes being squeezed in to what were already busy timetables, and such support was not always adequate.

The Back-on-Track initiative therefore provided funding for dedicated staffing (i.e. one day per week) for 12 of the project partners during 2009-10. Evidence from the project had already suggested that, with such support, some 75% of learners who joined the project would complete the year and most would gain at least two Wider Key Skills qualifications, and at the same time have opportunities to explore vocational options. Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) were also introduced as it was anticipated that these would be helpful in agreeing targets with individual learners. The evidence also suggested that all learners would benefit from increased motivation, self-esteem and self-confidence. The report which follows summarizes the experiences of the 50 learners who joined and were supported by the 12 partner TES.

### ***The structure of this report***

The first part of this report focuses upon the young Travellers involved; this begins with an overview of the cohort and then goes on to discuss the different educational contexts learners were situated in and examples of their progress. Hereafter is an overview of the challenge topics chosen by learners and three case-studies which provide a more detailed insight into the difference ELAMP made to young Travellers. This is followed by a summary of project results. The first section concludes with some discussion regarding these results and learners' destinations.

The second part of the report concentrates upon tutors' input and different models of project delivery. Once again three case-studies have been included, this time to highlight good practice.

The third and final part of the report contains discussion regarding the future of the project and concludes with an overview of the lessons learnt throughout this project that may well be useful for future practice.

The evaluation methodology for the ELAMP Back on Track initiative comprised of termly monitoring visits as well as the design of two detailed questionnaires for the collection of data and details on learners' progress and tutors' experiences of the project. These were completed in the summer term by tutors themselves. Case-studies were based on visits to different TES including semi-structured interviews with learners and tutors. Visits often incorporated observations of project delivery. Informed consent regarding interviews and photographs of learners were collated via TES tutors. All interviews were recorded for accuracy and draft copies were sent out to all tutors to share with learners to ensure precision of details. All names in the report have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

## PART 1: YOUNG TRAVELLERS, EDUCATION AND OUTCOMES

### Some facts and figures about the 50 young learners on the ‘Back on Track’ initiative (2009-10)

Initial pupil profiles were collected for all learners on the project, this information enabled an overview of learners’ backgrounds, academic support needs and aspirations. Below is a synopsis of the cohort’s gender, ethnicity, year group and educational provision.

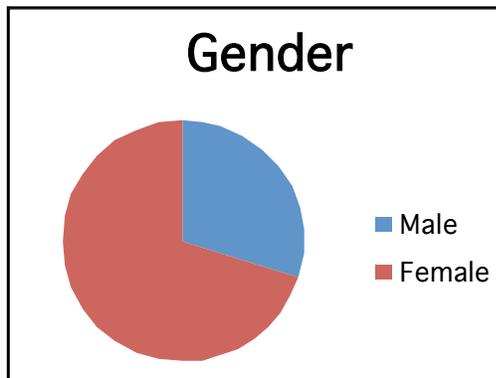
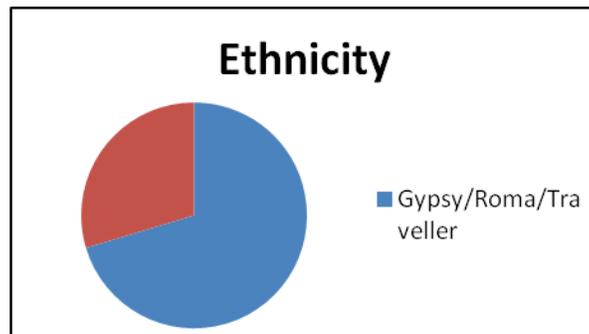


Figure 1 . Charts showing gender and ethnicity of cohort.



15 learners were male and 35 were female. 2/3 were from Gypsy/Roma heritage and 1/3 Travellers of Irish heritage.

Table 1. Analysis by educational context and year group.

	Y9	Y10	Y11	Other	Totals
School	1	5	2		8
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)	1	0	2		3
Elective Home Education (EHE)	7	11	8		26
Children Missing Education (CME)	5	5	1		11
Other				2 yr 12	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>50</b>

**Aspirations:** Early indications were that most young Travellers on the project only had very vague aspirations for their futures, and a priority of the project was to improve and support their vocational targets for post 16 options.

## Educational provision and young Travellers

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children have historically been the lowest achievers within all ethnic minority groups. The Plowden report (1976)<sup>1</sup> described this minority group as 'probably the most severely deprived in the country'. Thirty years later Ofsted (2003)<sup>2</sup> still portrayed Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children as the most at risk in education. Ofsted reports (1996<sup>3</sup>, 2003) have also drawn attention to the high number of secondary age Traveller children who are not registered in any school. Among those who do attend levels of attendance are low and disproportionate numbers are excluded. Issues with attainment and inclusion are still very evident today and a closer look at Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils' achievement scores in schools demonstrates this clearly.

The project's analysis of educational provision and year group (Table 1) reflects the high numbers of learners who are not in school. Only 22 % of the ELAMP Back on Track cohort were attending an educational institution and many more were registered as Electively Home Educated, with others not registered in any form of provision. Elective Home Education (EHE) has been the term used by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2007<sup>4</sup>) to describe parents' decisions to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. In this situation parents are responsible for their child(ren)'s education and Local Authorities (LAs) are not currently funded to support children on EHE. Table 2 indicates the school year in which learners out of education had actually left mainstream school; the highest proportion of learners left in Year 6; the primary/secondary transition year.

**Table2. Data gathered indicated when pupils had left school (details from 38 respondents)**

<b>Year group</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>No.of students</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>

### Progress: EHE participants

Unfortunately EHE is often used as a smokescreen by Traveller parents who are concerned about the impact of secondary schools on their children. ELAMP enabled continued contact with these young people, this was often rewarding for learners as well as those services

<sup>1</sup> Department of Education and Science (1967) Children and their Primary Schools , *The Plowden Report*, Central advisory Council for education(England) London: HMSO.

<sup>2</sup> Office for Standards in Education (2003) *Provision and Support for Traveller Pupils*, REF: HMI 455, November 2003, OFSTED.

<sup>3</sup> Office for Standards in Education (1996) *The Education of Travelling children*, REF: HMR/12/96/NS, OFSTED.

<sup>4</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007), *Elective Home Education, Guidelines for Local Authorities*, DCSF.

supporting them. Young Travellers are often isolated socially and miss out on advice and support regarding post-16 options. Below are three vignettes which highlight the benefits for some specific learners.

*Jean had never used a computer before starting the project; she has achieved much improved levels of literacy and ICT. ELAMP has given her an opportunity to develop her artistic skills which she never thought were worthwhile. Her self-esteem has increased as she was able to work with others who have become good friends; this has broadened her outlook after a very secure but isolated upbringing on a small family site.*

*Davy was keen to learn. He had been out of school since year 6 and was registered as EHE. He recognised his weak areas in ICT and targeted his learning to improve his knowledge and understanding. He visited the local college as part of ELAMP programme to see the courses on offer. He was so impressed by what the college had to offer that he expresses the wish to return to school to be able to access a college placement once in Year 10.*

*Beatrice had lost impetus studying alone at home. Now that she has completed the ELAMP programme, she is no longer isolated, has regained confidence as a learner and able to think clearly about her future and engage with those agencies which will help her to achieve. She is able to carry out tasks independently. This learner is no longer shy and withdrawn, feeling a misfit for having ambitions outside the norm for Traveller girls. She is happy and confident in her abilities and determined to do something with her life.*

### **Progress: Participants formerly not registered in any provision (CME)**

In total there were 11 learners on the project who were not registered as being in any form of educational provision; so called 'Children Missing Education' (CME). Once again this is where ELAMP enabled Traveller Education services and other education providers to give support. Engaging these young people in ELAMP meant that they were drawn back into learning and this process informed them of their choices for the future. Below is a vignette example of such a learner.

*Levi did exceptionally well and developed excellent IT skills through using these practically as the medium to present challenges. His application to completing challenges was impressive. He did a lot of independent work. He benefited from gaining qualifications that he would otherwise not have achieved. This experience has allowed him to fulfil his aspiration from the start, to attend college.*

## **Progress: School-based participants**

Some learners were still in school. These young Travellers were often selected as they were disengaged and the project was used as a way to re-engage them in learning, keep them in school and ensure support regarding their post-16 options.

Many schools reported positive results regarding learners' progress and commitment to the project. One learner involved stated that the portfolio she created was '*the most work I have ever done!*' and was immensely proud of her achievements. Another learner was so proud that she insisted on showing her portfolio to her Head of Year. Completing ELAMP challenges is often hard work for young people and they are subsequently very pleased with their achievements. ELAMP therefore enabled opportunities for disengaged, mainstream pupils to achieve and re-engage in their learning, this often had a very positive effect on other areas of study as ELAMP increased their overall motivation to learn.

## **Progress: Pupil Referral Unit participants**

A small number of learners on the project were already being provided with alternative education in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). PRUs are often a good site from which to deliver ELAMP as students based in these settings are already involved in a range of different learning activities, this arrangement often allows for appropriate flexibility and support of learning to meet individual's needs. ELAMP can add to existing provision as it is specifically Traveller focussed, this has been shown to improve students' motivation across their curriculum. Below is a vignette example of such a learner.

*Nathan had been educated in a PRU since Year 8. He enjoyed ELAMP as it enabled him to get involved in different educational projects and was supported in his work by a variety of professionals. This extended his original curriculum and provided interesting learning experiences. His tutor stated that he had been 'an absolute joy to work with'; she felt his work had improved in quality and become very analytical. Nathan hopes to go on to college to do a course in plumbing.*

## **Leavers**

Overall there were 12 learners who left the project, this is 24% of the total cohort. Reasons for leaving varied and included a mixture of unexpected travel patterns, motivation factors and lack of parental support. Where learners went travelling, it became problematic when they did not return in time to complete work. For one LA which was supporting geographically dispersed learners motivation was badly affected by severe winter weather, with sessions having to be cancelled. In other LAs some individual learners lost motivation and this was often related to family pressures or not enough parental support.

There was one situation where leaving was positive! This learner had visited a local college as part of the project; he was so impressed with what the college had to offer that he expressed the wish to return to school to be able to access a college placement.

The remainder of this section focuses on the 38 learners who continued with the project. First by providing three case-studies and then by looking at outcomes.

## CHANEL

Chanel is a Yr 11 pupil who has now been working on the ELAMP programme for just over a year. She comes from a large family with 5 brothers. She attended primary but left after two weeks in Year 6. She did not go on to secondary school because she was not offered a place at the local school; the school that had a place was further away and had a bad reputation.

Chanel had never used a laptop before she started ELAMP, she therefore needed a lot of support including basic ICT skills and getting back into a routine of learning. Her tutor, a Connexions worker employed within Norfolk TES was able to provide initial and ongoing support to complete her ELAMP work.

She is one of four girls who have been part of the ELAMP project in Norfolk 2009-2010. The group meet at a youth centre in Kings Lynn where they are supported by their tutor and an additional member of TES staff.

Chanel has made huge progress and at the time of the visit was on target to complete the challenges required to achieve all three of the Wider Key Skills qualifications.

*Her challenges included:*

*Becoming an ICT expert*

*Hair and Beauty*

*Child Development*

*Health and Social care*

*Customising Clothing*



Alongside her ELAMP work Chanel has been completing a Level 1 BTEC in Health & Social care at a local Education Youth Service (EYS). This course has provided her with the necessary progression she needed before going to College. She has an interview shortly and hopes to start a Child Care course in September 2010. Her tutor is also helping her organise a work placement in a local nursery setting.

These learning experiences have allowed her to mix with a wide range of other people; Chanel has found staff at EYS very supportive and has made many new friends.

Her progress is reported to have been amazing. She clearly loves learning and has completely mastered ICT skills, her reading and writing skills have also improved enormously. These skills are vital to her own learning progression but also help her family as she has been able to support her younger brother in aspects of his learning and schoolwork. Her self confidence and esteem has also improved significantly. Her tutor is very proud "You never have to sit behind Chanel, she just does it!"

## DANNY

Danny is a Yr 10 Traveller pupil of Irish Heritage. He comes from a large family with six siblings, where he is the eldest and holds many responsibilities within the family.

Danny attended primary school and secondary school, his educational journey was relatively smooth until Yr 10 when he became the victim of racist bullying. His tutor (an Advisory Teacher within the West Sussex Traveller Education Service) pointed out that this is not uncommon experience for Traveller pupils but resulted in a situation where he was too frightened to return to school. At this point an alternative education package was drawn up for him – this included the ELAMP programme and Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) which gave him access to a range of short courses including 'Gardening', 'Making a Go-Cart' and 'Extreme Sports'.

To complete his ELAMP work Danny met with his tutor on a weekly, one-to-one basis and went on to complete 2 IOLP Challenges 'Becoming an ICT Expert' and 'College Application and Interview' as well as 2 PS challenges 'Costing a Job' and 'Marketing a Product or a Skill'.



The benefits of this alternative provision are clear; as well as increased self-confidence and self esteem he also gained a certificate for his engagement and attendance with PAYP. In addition to the aforementioned programmes Danny has also undertaken a vehicle maintenance work experience placement, and attended two interviews at his local College. This process involved completing aptitude tests in Maths and English to ensure he received the right level of support for his learning for the Entry Level Motor Vehicle course on which he has now been offered a place for September 2010.

## SIOBHAN & CONNOR

This case study includes two learners who have been part of ELAMP for the past 18 months. Their stories have been combined as when interviewed they spoke about similar aspects of their project work and they have comparable aspirations for the future. Both are 15 years old (school year 10). Siobhan repeated her final year in primary school and was supported at this time by the support teacher from Somerset TES who now runs their group. She did not go on to secondary school and is now home educated. Previous contact with the TES meant that she was selected for the ELAMP project as she has always been a motivated learner. Connor completed primary school and went on to secondary school for about six months before he was withdrawn, he is currently home educated and works through a programme of learning at home alongside ELAMP. Connor always performed well academically and this was one of the reasons he came to mind when the local TES began delivering ELAMP. At the time of the visit both learners hoped to have completed all six challenges of the WKS challenges by the end of the academic year.

Customising a T-Shirt was a challenge they both particularly enjoyed. Learners initially researched their designs on the Internet; they then planned and purchased the resources needed. Tutors had organised a prize for the best T-Shirt which was judged by the Service co-ordinator. Siobhan won first prize and Connor came second.



Another challenge that both learners enjoyed was 'Caring for an Animal'. The whole group visited the RSPCA and a Horse sanctuary to inform them about the importance of proper care for different animals. Each learner then chose a specific animal to research for their project work. This needed to be an animal that they had regular contact with so that they could record the kind of care they gave their chosen animal. Both learners were enthusiastic about the project and enjoyed all the work they had completed. "There is not one I would pick out as my favourite as I have enjoyed all of them". A key benefit for Siobhan was the "friends I have made". Both learners feel that ELAMP had taught them many new skills, especially ICT skills and improved their choices for the future. ICT is a subject they both want to continue to study at college.

## Project Results: qualifications and challenges

Table 3 below indicates the nature of the challenges learners worked on throughout the year. Learners need to complete two challenges for each Wider Key Skill; Improving Own Learning and Performance (IOLP), Problem Solving (PS) and Working with Others (WWO). Completion of all three Wider Key Skills allowed learners to gain the approximate equivalent of two GCSE's at either A\*-C for Level 2 or D-G for Level 1 work.

**Table 4. Overview of challenge topics chosen by cohort in order of preference.**

<b>Wider Key Skills</b>	<b>IOLP</b>	<b>PS</b>	<b>WWO</b>	<b>Generic <sup>5</sup></b>
Challenge topics	Becoming an ICT expert Hair and Beauty Caring for an Animal Dangers of Drugs	Family History Marketing a product or a skill Pricing a Job What will I do when I am 16+	Customising Clothing Planning a Party Planning a Trip	Learning How to Cook Improving literacy and Numeracy Fashion

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<sup>5</sup> Generic challenges are those designed to enable learners to choose their own topic whilst maintaining assessment criteria.

## **Qualifications gained**

As indicated above 12 learners left the scheme early. This corresponds to the expectations for the year; a 75% completion rate. The other expectation was that most of the learners who competed would go on to achieve at least two Wider Key Skills, and here the breakdown of results was complicated by particular circumstances affecting two of the partner TES.

There were four submission dates for moderation throughout the year but the majority of partners chose to submit most of their students' work in July, 2010; i.e. at the end of the project year. One TES then missed the submission date for July entries even though the work of three students working at Level 1 was almost completed. This was reported to be due to the restructuring of the TES and personnel changes. Two other students being supported by this partner were away travelling in the early summer so hadn't finished the work required for the challenges. Another TES submitted four students for Level 2 and met the deadline, but the Ormiston Education moderation indicated that some further, relatively minor, work was needed to ensure that the entries met ASDAN standards. The seven students whose challenges were almost completed, or where further work was needed, were now reported to be entering for moderation in December 2010.

This is outside the project period and leaving out the learners from these two TES reduces the total completing from 38 to 29. For these remaining learners, supported by 10 TES, 59% did achieve at least two Wider Key Skills (mostly at Level 1 but one at level 2) and 31% achieved one Wider Key Skill qualification at Level 1. One other learner, working at Level 2, was asked to resubmit in December and two more had not entered as their families were away travelling in the weeks running up to the deadline.

In terms of expectations based on previous experience, 'most' learners within the 10 TES did meet the two Wider Key Skills target. In this context it should also be noted that the one-year project introduced an artificial end point, and if the eight learners submitting work in December are successful, two thirds of participants will have achieved at least two Wider Key Skills certificates; six of them at Level 2.

## Destinations

The ELAMP programme was intentionally set in a broader vocational context so that it could support young Travellers in making post-16 choices. Table 4 shows the destinations of the 13 participants who were in Y11.

**Table 4. Destinations for Yr.11 participants at the end of the project: Summer 2010.**

College course	Still pursuing options	Joined family business	Not currently pursuing options	Left project early	Total
5	3	1	1	3	13

Many learners in Yr 9 and Yr 10 hoped to continue with the programme (in the form of Bridge Builder, which is explained later on). Others would be carrying on in school or participating in another course before they too were of school leaving age and could apply for college or work placements. This highlights the importance of partnership links between providers as they are vital in ensuring a relevant educational programme can be sustained for these young people.

Feedback throughout the project indicated that the ELAMP process, the qualifications learners were able to achieve and the contact with TES and other services enabled young Travellers to have a much clearer idea of educational choices at post-16 level. More examples of this are seen in the vignettes below;

**Jean** - Jean has improved in ICT and literacy and has become more independent in her work. She is proud of the work she has put in and feels the qualification will help next year when she's applying for jobs or college. She now has a Connexions advisor and is confident to discuss her future plans with her.

**Vienna** - Vienna is going to have to work in the family business; she feels that she has been helped with this course, with skills and confidence to provide administration to the business. Her parents have very low levels of literacy. Options for further learning may be difficult but her tutor thinks she will look at further business training as she is very bright and now understands that it may give her some control and opportunities in the future.

## **PART 2: TRAVELLER EDUCATION TUTORS' FEEDBACK**

### **Teaching and Support**

The tutor's role with the ELAMP programme was felt to be absolutely crucial to the success of the project. Tutors needed to be creative in re-engaging young learners and their role was not restricted to teaching, it also required effective project management, providing IT support and partnership working as well as an ability to arrange appropriate transport and venues. Tutors have been very imaginative indeed in using ELAMP as a way to re-engage learners and strengthen young Travellers' career opportunities. There is not one specific model for delivering this work; this was often found to be a strength as ELAMP could be flexible to meet individual learner's needs.

For the academic year 2009-10, the project was fortunate in being able to provide funding for tutors to deliver the work. In principle this was to ensure 'dedicated time' that tutors required to 'protect' time for ELAMP work. However, this year the project's progress has been hampered by the national demise of many Traveller Education Services; some partners were directly affected by reorganization, and in one case the service was, in effect, disbanded. These changes have placed additional pressures upon some tutors who subsequently struggled to deliver planned work. The rest of this section is based on those who were able to use the time in a more straightforward way.

Delivery of the original ELAMP programme had tended to be through a hub (group) model, or on a one-to-one basis. However this year many TES reported using a mixture of both. Overall there were five TES using a hub model, three TES working on a one-to-one basis with learners and four using a mixture of both models. The individual approach tended to be used where the geographical distribution of the learners across the LA was too great, or where it was difficult to identify an appropriate learning centre or transportation.

The typical Hub model was where students met their tutor once a week. Venues were reported to work best when they were in established learning environments, such as on a school site, or at a learning/resource centre with access to ICT facilities. Dedicated weekly slots facilitated all learners getting back into a routine of learning. They also allowed for regular contact with learners and this provided opportunities for visitors and visits. Often TES were also able to put on extra- curricular activities to benefit learners.

Contact between sessions varied, some tutors used email to correspond with learners; this depended on the levels of Internet connectivity learners were able to access at home. Others used the phone to communicate, especially when there was an issue with work or meeting up.

All those using a Hub model spoke of the improved interaction and learning, development of social skills, making friends and improved levels of self-esteem and confidence. As many learners were isolated, ELAMP was a way of meeting others and accessing services young Travellers had not been aware of previously. Evidence of this softer outcome is seen below in a vignette for a female learner:

*A big improvement was her ability to work with others. She had left school because of behavioural issues and she found it difficult at first to find her place in the group. Her levels of confidence and self esteem have been raised and now she is in contact with other group members. She also has started helping others as a matter of course.*

Although those who were taught individually lacked the social element, some learners were reported to have preferred individual learning support and were often able to make faster progress as there were no distractions from other learners. Many tutors recognised this and consequently provided individual support alongside hub sessions.

Whether learners were taught through a hub model or in a one-to-one context it was apparent that teacher support was vital to maintain motivation and momentum towards attaining each individual's goals. This is not surprising as many of the young people had not been in school for considerable periods of time before ELAMP. Tutors managed this effectively and there were many examples of good practice throughout the pilot which included;

- Building up portfolio's of learners work to use at interview or for college applications
- Delivering additional accreditation alongside the WKS programme such as Level 1 and 2 in Literacy, Numeracy and ICT.
- Visiting Colleges and Universities
- Visiting Connexions or arranging visits from this service to discuss learners' vocational options
- Working in partnership with other educational providers to deliver a more substantial programme for learners or to run specific targeted projects.

### **Highlights of the work**

ELAMP enabled a learner focused approach and provided an important opportunity to work with young Travellers over a sustained period of time; this facilitated a better understanding of their ambitions and support needs. Tutor comments regarding the highlights and most enjoyable aspects of the work often included the relationship built with learners and families and witnessing increased independent learning and communication skills, self confidence and self esteem in learners. Tutors actively observed improved levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT, as well as the achievement of qualifications and the positive reactions of learners regarding their achievements.

*One young Traveller who was very difficult to initially support through her own perceptions and family circumstances one day looked at her work and said " I did really do that", then proceeded to provide a really competent presentation completely without support. Another had not touched a computer, never attended a secondary school but worked so hard and now has a place at College this September.*

Tutors also commented on the positive aspects of being able to provide disaffected learners with new opportunities to receive accreditation and go onto college, further education or employment. Learners were able to access support in career aspirations and goals in post-16 education and therefore had improved career direction.

### **Challenges faced by tutors**

Although engaging young Travellers back into learning was a positive experience, the process could also be challenging, especially where learners had been removed from the structure and demands of academic learning for some time. Developing a work ethic in learners and encouraging skills of reliability and commitment was therefore reported as an important aspect of the work. Furthermore, tutors commented that young Travellers often had other commitments, e.g. looking after children or family members, which are not normally experienced by non-Traveller pupils. Some families also travel and this could mean that they were not able to complete work, this hampered progress in several situations.

ICT issues tended to be a challenge for many tutors at some stage of the project. This was often because Internet connectivity could be very variable. Many had no IT support which meant that they alone had to deal with any issue involving connectivity or laptop maintenance.

### **Personalised Learning Plans (PLP's)**

In 2008 the Department for Children, Schools and Families launched their 'Back on Track' White paper to modernise alternative education. Within this document it was suggested that every child receiving alternative provision should have a personalised education plan tailored to their needs. ELAMP incorporated this approach and part of the TES partner requirement was to complete specifically designed personal learning plans once a term with their learners. The aim of this paperwork was to secure a pupil centred approach that ensured early planning and regular review to map out learners progress and vocational targets to identify the support they might need to succeed.

Different TES approached their PLP's in a variety of ways. One TES set targets every week alongside the broader PLP review process. Some tutors felt that a review, once a term was too long a gap and preferred a brief (broad) review every 4 weeks or so. This coincided with the review period set out in the Back on Track recommendations. Other TES felt that it was more useful to set initial targets and review just once towards the end of the academic year.

Some TES worked with Connexions to provide a more structured review in the form of a meeting between Connexions adviser and learner. This process enabled regular practical reviews and secured a relationship between Connexions and the learner which would go on beyond the lifetime of the project.

Overall feedback about the PLP process and other forms of review was that they provided a useful framework, but needed to be used flexibly depending on learners' individual situations. In some cases, where learners remained very vague about vocational targets and post 16 choices, the system was not as productive as intended.

## **Partnerships**

A key aim of the ELAMP project was to build bridges for learners' educational and occupational futures and partnership working played an important part in this. Project managers observed TES's partnership initiatives alongside more general pupil progress as part of their monitoring visits.

Partnerships with Connexions and FE colleges were found to be most important as combined both services had the expertise to provide accurate information about local provision and opportunities that were on offer. Across the project there were also good examples of partnerships with a very wide range of services such as Youth Services (including the 'Positive Futures' initiative), museums, art galleries, libraries and even universities.

Some TES were fortunate enough to have a dedicated Connexions worker as part of their service. In one TES it was this Connexions worker who actually delivered the ELAMP project. Another TES had a dedicated person in their team to liaise with colleges and Connexions. The importance of partnership working to ensure young Travellers progression is clearly well acknowledged and in some TES this practice has been strengthened by establishing specific posts.

Securing a vocational focus was an important outcome for the project. This ELAMP project clearly improved joint working between services and achieved this goal. It is also imperative to note that the TES was almost always the catalyst in this relationship and normally no intervention by other services would have taken place without the support and facilitation provided by the Traveller Education Services. This reflects the major role of TES in ensuring young Travellers' access and inclusion within education.

## **Professional development**

Tutors reported that the delivery of the project had involved a huge learning curve. For some this included a significant improvement in ICT skills as well as the delivery of the vocational learning programme. For most it meant using and sharing new and creative 'out of the box' ideas which were needed to engage learners in terms of their individual strengths and interests.

'Managing and motivating a number of disaffected and diverse learners whilst keeping a sense of humour and proportion' was also quoted as being an invaluable skill to practice. Many tutors also commented on the learning from partnerships with other services including Connexions, other ELAMP tutors and Local Authority officers. In order to highlight some different methods of delivering the project three case studies of TES approaches have also been included in this report. These can also provide good practice examples for services who take up the project in the future.

## YORK

York is a small city – with roughly 400 Traveller families. York’s Traveller Education Service (TES) is part of the City of York Council Education Services and there was one teacher in the team who took responsibility for all aspects of planning and delivery of the ELAMP programme. The funding for tutor time this year has enabled dedicated time outside of other TES commitments to deliver the programme.

“Without the additional day I wouldn’t have been able to deliver the programme to all learners on my own”. Her time was spread across the working week as she met with different students on different days & times.

Transition rates to secondary school are good in York, yet disaffection is an issue in KS4. 2009-10 was the second year that York had delivered the programme. All ELAMP learners were in education; most were in school and one was in a Pupil Referral Unit. All students were working at Level 2 which meant they would be able to gain the equivalent of 2 GCSE’s Grade A-C when they complete all 6 challenges.

The delivery approach had been mixed, according to individual learners’ needs, some sessions were delivered 1 to 1, some were in a Hub. Work was rarely completed in school, instead the focus was on an extended curriculum delivered through a multi-agency, project based approach. An example of this was the Family History challenges where learners worked with the Youth Service and an Art Curator at a local Gallery and visited museum exhibits about Crown Derby, Romany caravans and gallows.....!



*Challenges completed included:*

*Family History*

*‘Pegducation’*

*Becoming an ICT expert*

*Hair and Beauty*

*Dangers of Drugs*

The Pegducation project, was in partnership with Richard O’Neill ( a professional storyteller who is himself a Traveller) to develop, market, advertise , produce and eventually sell pegducation sets, which are traditional Traveller stories that embrace issues for young Travellers today, to primary schools in York.

Partnership working was seen as essential to the effective and creative delivery of the work. Learners commented on how much they enjoyed working with other services and taking part in trips and visits as part of the project work. The tutor felt that ELAMP really complimented her TES work as “fundamentally, it builds my relationship with schools as the pupils gain specific qualifications and points on the school table”. York are continuing this work next academic year with Ormiston Education.

## SUFFOLK

Suffolk GRTAS have been unique in their delivery approach towards ELAMP since 2008 when they employed a local teacher, who is himself a Traveller. An Advice Liaison Teacher manages and oversees the project. Five learners were enrolled on the project this year; four learners were working at Level 1 with one learner on Level 2. All these learners were registered as Electively Home Educated.

Suffolk used a hub approach and all learners come together every Thursday afternoon at a local Learning Centre. Parents brought learners to the session and overall attendance had been good. In this way parents also benefited as they had contact with broader education through access to the learning centre which offers a variety of learning programmes for all ages. Every session was officially 2 hours long and carefully structured, however there was an additional hour at the end for students who needed extra 1-1 support.



When beginning a new challenge the tutor worked with the whole group to plan the work. The first part of each session was then usually devoted to literacy and numeracy. Independent learning was promoted by giving 'homework' tasks to complete between sessions. Good opportunities to link the WKS challenges to the literacy and numeracy qualifications had been identified, these qualifications are felt to be a particularly important as they are a necessary requirement for learners to get a place at local colleges.

At the time of the visit, the learners working at Level 1 had all completed four challenges, including 'Marketing a product' where they planned how best to market specific businesses. Their Level 2 learner has delivered a mini-class to others on the topic of 3D shapes, organised a party and was planning a trip out for the whole group to London once their work this year was finished.

The group had had regular visits from Connexions to plan and discuss choices about their further education and vocational options. They had also been interviewed at the Learning Centre by an author who is writing a novel about young Travellers and from the LA's EHE consultant. The ELAMP tutor and the Advice Liaison Teacher had accompanied the group on a visit to a university campus and FE college to raise aspiration levels. Suffolk again plans to continue the project with the Ormiston Trust next year.

The tutor had really enjoyed teaching the group, and found that the learning centre provides a positive environment to sustain young Travellers' motivation and interest in learning. The fact that he is a teacher and a governor at a local school is truly a fantastic role model for younger Travellers.

## SOMERSET

Somerset Traveller Education Service had two support teachers who were involved in delivering the ELAMP project. In Somerset Gypsy Roma Travellers are the largest ethnic minority group and yet only 50% transfer to secondary school. In this county ELAMP has therefore been used to support those children who did not transfer and opted for Elective Home Education. This county is one of the few in England that provide some funding to support families which home-educate. The tutors used a hub model and met their group in a resource base on an education site. Their sessions ran for 2 hours every week during term-time and parents brought and collected their own children. There were currently four students in the group, three would have been in yr 10 and the other student would have been in his final year of school.

For 2009-10 the group had worked collectively on the Problem Solving and Working With Others challenges. Although they all completed the same challenge they adopted an individual approach to their work. Each challenge usually lasted around 8 weeks and the group sessions were structured around the plan, do and review learning process; tutors planned specific tasks for the session and staff and students supported each other in their work.

*Challenges included:*

*Family History*

*What will I do when I am 16+*

*Customising Clothing*

*Planning a party*

*Healthy living*

Alongside their ELAMP work the tutors had acquired separate funding from the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital fund to set up a Traveller youth group, which consisted of 35 members who had had the opportunity to take part in a range of group excursions.

More recently the ELAMP learners had been involved in making a film with funding from the British Film Industry that reflected the real issues in young Travellers lives. The combination of all of these opportunities had resulted in increasing self-esteem as well as the acquisition of specific skills such as IT (including film making) and social skills.

One of their generic challenges concentrated on healthy living and all learners kept a food diary between sessions. Tutors also shared some research about the health status of Gypsies and Travellers in England (Sheffield University, 2004<sup>6</sup>) which had a very positive real impact on their attitudes to their own health.

ELAMP is felt to be worthwhile as it had raised learners' awareness of their own culture and improved their ability to articulate about their own lifestyles. All learners planned to go on to college and tutors felt that this was an additional benefit as many did not have any clear plans of post 16 choices at the outset. Somerset plans to continue this work with Ormiston in the next academic year.

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<sup>6</sup> Parry et al. (2004) The Health Status of Gypsies & Travellers in England, Summary of a report to the Department of Health

## **PART 3: The Future**

Summer 2010 signalled the end of this DCSF pilot phase. Fortunately ELAMP is not ending as the project has found a new home with Ormiston Education, a Birmingham-based charitable trust. Ormiston Education have now added an improved version of the ELAMP programme to their own 'YouChoose' virtual learning environment. The new version is called the 'Bridge Builder' option,<sup>7</sup> Learners who access Bridge Builder will still be able to work through a set of similar challenges to gain Wider Key Skills qualifications. In addition they will be offered a literacy module as ELAMP has shown that this is an important qualification for learners who want to secure a place at College.

Bridge Builder can be accessed on-line; there will also be an off-line facility for laptop use where internet access is problematic. The programme is still designed for young people from Year 9 or Key Stage 4 and continues to have a vocational emphasis and can be used for learners within school or out of school. The target audience is young Travellers, however the programme could well have benefits for other young people and other age-groups including post-16 learners.

As the pilot ends so does the funding for equipment, connectivity, tutors and programme registration. There is a relatively low cost per pupil to register future learners on 'Bridge Builder' and establishments using the programme will need to locate their own equipment and tutors to support the programme. Out of the 21 TES which have been part of this ELAMP programme at some stage, only 8 had been able to confirm that they are continuing directly with Bridge Builder in the Autumn. At the time of writing, others wanted to continue but the current financial climate and restructuring of many TES have made this problematic. Other TES (not previously involved with this aspect of the work of ELAMP) have also shown an interest, one has joined and it is hoped that more may follow.

## **Conclusions**

ELAMP has been a unique programme which, although not a panacea, has the potential to re-engage many young Travellers across differing educational contexts. This re-engagement tended to work because project 'challenges' reflected the vocational and personal interests of young Travellers. As a consequence learners actively enjoyed their work, as they found it relevant to their cultural expectations and career aspirations. Being out of school has not reflected a lack of desire to learn and the project has provided a new and positive focus.

ELAMP provided a unique opportunity for TES staff to work closely with young Travellers who were on the fringes of schooling but also support those who were, for whatever reason, registered as home educated, as well as learners within the category 'Children Missing Education'. The learning framework provided a basic starting point for provision from which tutors could build a substantive educational programme according to their young Travellers' needs.

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<sup>7</sup> For further details see <http://www.youchooselearning.co.uk/>

TES were ultimately the catalysts within a process which also focused on vocational options, as they ensured that young Travellers' needs were highlighted and addressed through effective partnership working between services. In this way the TES built bridges between Traveller families and relevant services which will be beneficial beyond the end of this pilot.

The Back on Track initiative also confirmed the importance of giving staff dedicated time for the tutorial role and outcomes show clearly that this model of working enables some of the most vulnerable young people in education to re-engage. Learners achieved useful qualifications as well as improved levels of motivation, self-esteem and self-confidence which underlie the achievement and attainment of all children and young people. Moreover the work ensured that young Travellers had improved levels of understanding regarding their choices for further education or work. The combination of all these results meant that a significant proportion of the cohort were focused on re-engaging in mainstream education.

The project is fortunate in being able to continue as it has found a home with Ormiston Education. However recent economic pressures have meant that many Traveller Education Services are under threat of being closed down, or their work diluted by reductions in size or 'restructuring'. As noted above, there was already evidence of this within the project during 2009-10, and it remains a very significant concern as LAs look to reduce budgets.

## **Appendix 1- Participating Traveller Education Services**

### **The Back on Track pilot partners**

Avon Consortium (ACTES)

Blackpool

Cambridgeshire

Gloucestershire

Hillingdon

Norfolk

Northamptonshire

Somerset

Suffolk

Wolverhampton

West Sussex

York

### **Other partners actively involved with the Strand B project during 2009-10**

Croydon

Derby and Derbyshire

Devon Consortium (DCTES)

Hampshire

Harrow

Milton Keynes

Richmond on Thames

Wiltshire

(North Yorkshire withdrew part way through the year following re-organization)