

LIMERICK TRAVELLER NETWORK

Strategic Plan 2026 - 2030



EXCHANGE HOUSE IRELAND
National Travellers Service



LIMERICK
TRAVELLER
NETWORK

"Giving Travellers A
Voice"



Foreword

We are very proud to present Limerick Traveller Network's first Strategic Plan, because it builds on the strong foundations of work that started in 2019. During the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, we – as two Traveller women living in Limerick – saw how little support there was for Travellers during the crisis. In a voluntary capacity, we went around to all sites and houses to talk with Travellers and organised our first meeting in the chapel in Southill. The needs of Travellers in Limerick were clearly seen by the number of Traveller women who came to that meeting where, together, we agreed that Travellers in Limerick had no voice.

After a few more meetings, we set up a Go Fund Me page and bought supplies like gloves, masks, hand sanitiser and bleach and organised pick-up and drop-off points so that every member of our community had Covid kits. We distributed children's education and activity packs, along with well-being packs for adults and the elderly. We worked hard to make sure that no Traveller was left behind during the pandemic. We started to hold meetings in our Lady of Lourdes Community Centre and got support from Exchange House Ireland and what was then known as PAUL Partnership. 12 Traveller women became the agreed representatives from all halting sites and houses where Travellers live.

Those meetings were for the spark for what became the bright light that is now Limerick Traveller Network. We organised courses and training in group facilitation, trauma informed care, mental health and much more. We invited Minister Joe O'Brien down and presented him with our proposal on what LTN could be and do. With funding from the Minister and support from Exchange House Ireland, we opened an office in Our Lady of Lourdes and employed some staff members. We drew down funding from the Toy Show and undertook a huge educational research project, where 12 Traveller women were trained and paid to work as peer researchers. The momentum kept growing.

We hope that this gives you a snapshot of all the work and energy that went into establishing and growing Limerick Traveller Network. We now present LTN's 5-year Strategic Plan as the roadmap for focusing our work and making the vision for a Limerick where all Travellers thrive a reality. We hope that you will support this work and vision by being a true Traveller ally.

With our best wishes and thanks, as ever, to our network of strong, brilliant Traveller women.

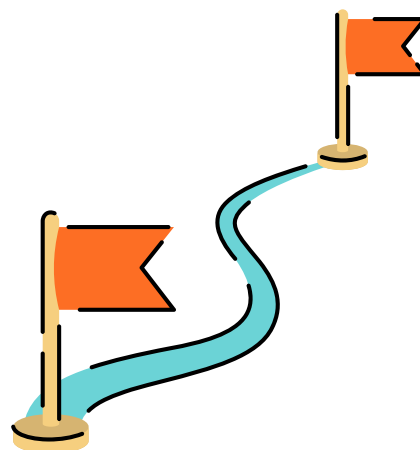
Olive & Margaret

Olive O'Reilly and Margaret O'Brien
LTN Co-founders

Introduction

Our Journey So Far

Prior to the LTN coming into existence there was no Traveller community development project in Limerick City and there had not been for a number of years.


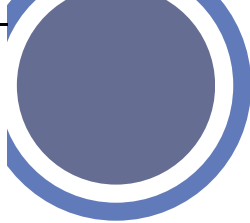


The Limerick Traveller Network (LTN) is a community-led network of Traveller representatives from all Traveller sites and areas in Limerick City. LTN was founded by Olive O'Reilly and Margaret O'Brien who, during Covid, went door-to-door to every Traveller family in Limerick city and suburbs to bring people together under one network. 11 Travellers became representatives of 8 of the 9 sites in Limerick City, including houses where Travellers live. Of approximately 150 Traveller families living in Limerick, 130 have consented to representation through LTN. This is very significant because it is the first time that there has been such wide representation from the Traveller community in Limerick City. In other words, it is the first time Travellers have had such a strong and united voice.

LTN is funded by the Department of Community and Rural Development and sits under the governance of Exchange House Ireland National Traveller Service. It currently employs a support team of 1 Co-ordinator and 2 Network Leadership Workers, with staffing due to increase at the end of 2025. LTN is seeking to become an independent organisation in the coming years.

Since its formation in 2019, LTN's vision has been rooted in empowerment, inclusion and collective action. The Network's founders and members understand that real change will only come by raising the Traveller community's own voice and working together for common goals.





Limerick Traveller Network is built on values of **respect, fairness and pride** in who we are. We believe that Travellers should have a real say in what happens in our lives and in our community. LTN stands for **equality and inclusion**, making sure everyone is treated with **dignity** and has the same chances as others. We work to build understanding between Travellers and settled people, and to speak up against discrimination wherever it happens. Most of all, LTN stays led by Travellers, guided by the voices and experiences of the people it represents, and focused on making life better for the Traveller community in Limerick – now and into the future.

Our Vision

LTN, set up by Travellers for Travellers, wants to see a future where:

- Traveller voices are heard in every decision that affects our community
- Travellers enjoy equal opportunities in education, health, employment and accommodation
- Traveller culture is respected and celebrated in Limerick, our home city.



“
**NOTHING
ABOUT US,
WITHOUT US**
”

Our Network strives for a Limerick in which LTN is well-known and has a strong identity, where Traveller families experience positive changes, and young Travellers can thrive and complete their education.

Dignity, equality, opportunity and positive change and/or outcomes guides all of our work.

Our track record


In just a few years, LTN has built a track record of community-driven initiatives.

One of our key achievements is the Traveller Education Change Project (TEC), a participatory research project led by Traveller peer researchers from LTN. Education emerged as an urgent priority in LTN's early discussions, which led the Network to undertake this major research effort in 2023–2024. With support from Exchange House Ireland (National Travellers Service), additional funding from the Toy Show Appeal and academic guidance from Maynooth University, LTN members were trained as peer researchers and documented the barriers Traveller children face in education

The TEC Project empowered the community and the peer researchers grew in confidence and skills, becoming agents of positive change. The published TEC report has amplified Traveller voices on education at local and national levels, making clear that Traveller education needs to be both a local and national priority and offering solutions driven by Traveller experiences and ideas.

Beyond education, LTN representatives identified other critical issues through community conversations and workshops. Between 2019 and 2025, LTN undertook community needs surveys which highlighted accommodation, mental health, youth needs and voter engagement. These research and consultation efforts helped map out the gaps in services and inform this Strategic Plan.





Similarly, the scope and vision of our first ever Strategic Plan draws on the work we have undertaken since the Network was established. At a glance, this includes:

- Women's Groups
- Supporting positive mental health/ suicide awareness events, including hosting a visit from the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights with the University of Limerick
- Political Awareness campaign, supporting Travellers to vote and engage with the political system in partnership with *Minceirs Whiden*
- Activities with parents and young people with Limerick Sports Partnership
- Providing educational mentoring support in partnership with Limerick City Partnership and UL Access Office for 11 students from the Traveller community in Limerick City to undertake a Masters Programme in Youth, Community and Social Regeneration
- Working closely with Limerick Traveller Accommodation Unit on a submission to the Council on Traveller Accommodation Plan
- Having 2 representatives on Limerick Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and supporting reps from sites to meet with Limerick City and County Council to work towards improvements in Traveller accommodation
- Presentations at national conferences such as the Social Inclusion conference in 2024 and the Prevention and Early Intervention Summit in 2025.

In addition to this work, LTN has also invested in building the capacity of its members: Travellers involved in LTN completed training in leadership skills, facilitation, suicide prevention, trauma-informed care, mental health first aid, Children First (safeguarding), governance, GDPR and more. This investment means the community now has a cohort of trained leaders ready to drive change on many fronts.



Community Leadership

All of LTN's work is guided by lived experience. Our Network prides itself on being "for Travellers, by Travellers." The lived experiences of Traveller families – their challenges and their resilience – form the foundation of this Strategic Plan. LTN's peer research and community workshops ensured that collective voices shaped the plan's priorities. As one parent involved in the education research project noted: *"We all have issues, memories of being left out or let down... we don't want that for our children."*



This Strategic Plan carries that determination forward, keeping community hope and resilience at the core. Before finalising this plan, LTN conducted a broad community survey among Travellers and a series of workshops in late 2024 and early 2025 to hear directly from Travellers in Limerick about what matters most to them. Over 85% of survey respondents indicated they know what LTN does, showing that the Network has established a strong presence in the community.

The feedback and insights from the community, summarised in the next section, directly shape the 5 strategic strands and actions we will pursue over the next 5 years.

What our Community told us



188 Travellers responded to our community survey. What they told us underscores the key priorities they want LTN to focus on, as well as critical service gaps that Travellers face in Limerick.

Travellers were asked to rank 5 proposed areas of work (our strategic strands) from 1 = most important to 5 = least important. The results reveal clear preferences. **Mental Health** emerged as the top priority. Over 64% of respondents ranked Mental Health as the single most important issue for their family, reflecting the urgency of mental health concerns in the Traveller community.

OUR COMMUNITY IS ON OUR KNEES. THIS IS THE WORST IT HAS EVER BEEN FOR TRAVELLERS!

The next highest priority was Accommodation, followed by Education.

These three areas – mental health, housing, and education – are the top priorities for most Traveller families in Limerick. Youth Work and Discrimination are still considered important, but ranked lower in priority.

In fact, many Travellers placed discrimination as a lower immediate concern compared to day-to-day needs like health, housing and youth supports. This may be because discrimination is seen as a more systemic issue and something that Travellers have always experienced. LTN will, therefore, tackle discrimination as a cross-cutting theme in this Strategic Plan.

The community survey also shed light on service gaps and unmet needs in local areas. Travellers were asked what services are missing in their area. The most commonly missing services identified were women's groups (76%) and services for older people (69%). This indicates a significant gap in supports for Traveller women and older people, two groups who often face isolation.

Many also reported a lack of men's groups (65%) and sports facilities (65%) in their communities. Over 63% noted a lack of youth clubs and safe play areas for children, highlighting how few structured activities exist for Traveller youth outside of school. More than half (52%) said there is no after-school club or service available to their family and nearly 48% reported a lack of childcare services locally.

These gaps paint a picture of communities with very limited infrastructure for children, teenagers, and families – no play spaces, few youth projects and a shortage of childcare places. Such missing supports can hinder education and social development, and place extra stress on Traveller parents.





What external stakeholders told us

“ MY DEPARTMENT HAS LESS FUNDING TO SUPPORT TRAVELLER SERVICES THAN IT DID 10 YEARS AGO, DESPITE THE INCREASING NEEDS AND MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS. ”

In addition to our Community survey, we also felt that it was important to seek input on our work and Strategic Plan from other services and organisations. We refer to these as our “external stakeholders”. These include services with a responsibility for health, mental health, child protection, education, employment, housing, community development etc. Some of them we already engage with and others we hope to start working with. It is our hope to build a network of allies locally who can support and champion the work of LTN and whose work we can help Travellers to better understand.

21 external stakeholders responded to our survey. Some profile questions helped us to understand their feedback:

- 43% work in the public service and 57% work in a Community & Voluntary organisation
- The majority work in education, health, family support and supports to migrant/minority populations
- As part of their work, 80% reported making decisions that affect Travellers lives (i.e. funding allocations)
- 85% considered themselves informed/aware of Travellers and Traveller culture.
- 85% (18 people) believe that Travellers have some specific needs that are different from those of the general population.

A very important insight from our stakeholder survey is that while 17 people said they would employ a Traveller in their organisation, only 2 suggested how they could support this to happen (training and changing hiring policy). This really highlights how important LTN’s role is in working in partnership with external organisations. Through our Strategic Plan, we want to help organisations to be confident and able to work with Travellers. LTN can play a critical link in bridging that gap between services, employers and Travellers.



Using this learning

These community and stakeholder consultation findings have heavily informed LTN's strategic priorities.

The 5 strands in this Strategic Plan directly correspond to the areas identified as most important: Education, Mental Health, Accommodation, Youth, and Discrimination. The feedback on missing services (childcare, youth clubs, etc.) has guided the specific actions under those strands. For example, the strong call for youth clubs is reflected in our Youth strand actions, and the need for women's groups appears under Mental Health and community support actions.

In the following sections, each strategic strand is presented with an account of why it matters to Travellers, followed by the key priorities and actions LTN will pursue in that area. Community voices and data (like those shared above) are woven into each strand. This means that the LTN Strategic Plan addresses the real issues and gaps that families have identified.



**“ WE HAVE GREAT SUPPORT
BUT WE NEED TO KEEP
MOVING FORWARD AND TO
STAND ON OUR OWN TWO
FEET. ”**

Governance now and into the future

For LTN to achieve its vision, we must also strengthen our governance and autonomy. Currently, LTN operates under Exchange House Ireland, the National Travellers Service. Exchange House provides us with vital support, including hosting projects (like the education research) and acting as an umbrella for funding and administration. This support has enabled LTN to grow from an informal network into an organised group. However, LTN aspires to become an independent Traveller-led organisation in the coming years. We recognise that we are not yet ready to “go solo” and still need Exchange House’s support, especially for technical expertise and infrastructure.

A gradual, planned path to independence is part of this Strategic Plan. At present, LTN is a network of Traveller representatives (some who have been employed on a part-time basis and some volunteers) and presently with a part-time Coordinator and a support worker from the Traveller community. LTN does not yet have its own legal structure or full-time staff. A critical step taken in early 2025 was the decision to establish a formal Steering Group to guide LTN’s development and the delivery of the Strategic Plan. This interim Steering Group will include experienced LTN members and supportive partners. The intended membership includes: 4 Traveller representatives from LTN, a representative from Exchange House and a representative from Limerick City Partnership. This Steering Group will expand to include relevant service partners over time.



This mix ensures that Travellers hold the majority voice while leveraging the advice of ally organisations. The Steering Group began meeting mid-2025 and will undergo governance training. By 2026, this group will function as the governing body for the Strategic Plan, setting direction and monitoring progress.



Over the 5 year plan, LTN will form 5 thematic Working Groups aligned with our strategic priorities. These working groups – Education, Accommodation, Mental Health, Youth, and Discrimination – will be made up of LTN members (and other Traveller community volunteers) who are passionate about each area, as well as partners from relevant agencies.



Each Working Group will coordinate community activities and advocacy in their strand, and will report to the Steering Group. For example, the Education Working Group might include some of the peer researchers from the TEC project, a local school principal, an LCETB manager and an academic from Mary Immaculate College, focusing on school retention and alternative education initiatives. This structure ensures broad participation and that expertise from lived experience guides each strand's work. It also spreads responsibility, recognising that LTN's work is largely voluntary and needs to be shared by many. This model will be progressed in stages and in line with staffing resources available.

Towards independence

Between 2026 and 2030, LTN will take concrete steps toward becoming an independent organisation. In partnership with Exchange House, we will develop a roadmap for independence that might include establishing LTN as a legally constituted entity (for example, a charity or co-operative) by the end of 2030. Key considerations will be securing sustainable funding, developing our own administrative and financial management capacity, and creating policies/procedures for the new organisation. Exchange House will continue to support us through this process.

By the end of this Strategic Plan, our hope is that LTN will be ready to operate independently with confidence, while still maintaining strong partnerships. This would mean hiring our own staff and managing our own budget. Another aspect of independence is establishing LTN's own identity and communications. There is a strong need for LTN branding and visibility, including such things as our own website, Facebook page etc. To achieve this, we will need to develop our own branding and launch our own social media presence.

A major goal is to have a physical space for LTN, what members call a "home for the network and for Travellers". We want to work towards securing a small office or community space that can serve as LTN's base and a drop-in centre for Travellers in Limerick. This will greatly enhance our independence and presence in the community.

Strong governance and gradual movement towards becoming an independent organisation are key to delivering on all our strategic strands. With a new Steering Group in place, 5 active Working Groups, ongoing support from Exchange House and further capacity-building for our members, LTN's organisational development will go hand-in-hand with community development.

We are building a network that belongs to the Traveller community of Limerick that will last well beyond 2030. Critical to this is a pressing need to secure longer term core funding.



LTN HAS DONE A LOT OF WORK IN A VERY SHORT TIME. I WANT TO SEE THE NETWORK CONTINUE TO GROW AND BECOME A GO-TO FOR TRAVELLER ISSUES IN LIMERICK.





Strand 1: Education

“ 11 TRAVELLER WOMEN DOING A MASTERS IS UNBELIEVABLE ALTOGETHER. THESE WOMEN ARE ROLE MODELS TO YOUNG TRAVELLERS AND CHILDREN. IT TELLS THEM TO STAY IN SCHOOL, YOU CAN DO THIS TOO. ”

Why This Matters

Education is often called “the key to the future,” and LTN firmly believes that improving educational outcomes for Travellers is critical for the next generation. Irish Travellers have historically faced significant barriers in accessing and succeeding in education and in having equal access to job opportunities.

Decades of systemic discrimination has resulted in low school completion rates for Traveller children. Many Traveller students still encounter low expectations from teachers, a lack of cultural representation in what they are learning and bias in schools.

These factors have led to entrenched educational inequalities. Traveller children, for example, remain disproportionately excluded at higher levels of education and have far lower rates of second-level completion compared to their peers.

The impact of these disparities is felt across the community. Without qualifications, Travellers have fewer job opportunities and face greater social exclusion. Despite these challenges, Traveller parents and children have a strong desire for education. As our TEC research found, Traveller children start school with enthusiasm and big aspirations, and parents are deeply invested in their children’s learning.

LTN's goal is to bridge the gap between those aspirations and the current reality by making the education system more inclusive and responsive to Traveller needs. LTN's Traveller Education Change Project gathered extensive data on educational issues in Limerick's Traveller community. It highlighted problems such as high rates of special education placement for Traveller pupils, lack of communication with Traveller parents, early school leaving and experiences of discrimination in schools (nearly 56% of Traveller students in secondary school reported discrimination in the TEC survey). It also offered solutions, emphasising the importance of Traveller culture in schools, better communication with parents and higher expectations for Traveller students.

New network aims to give Limerick Travellers a voice

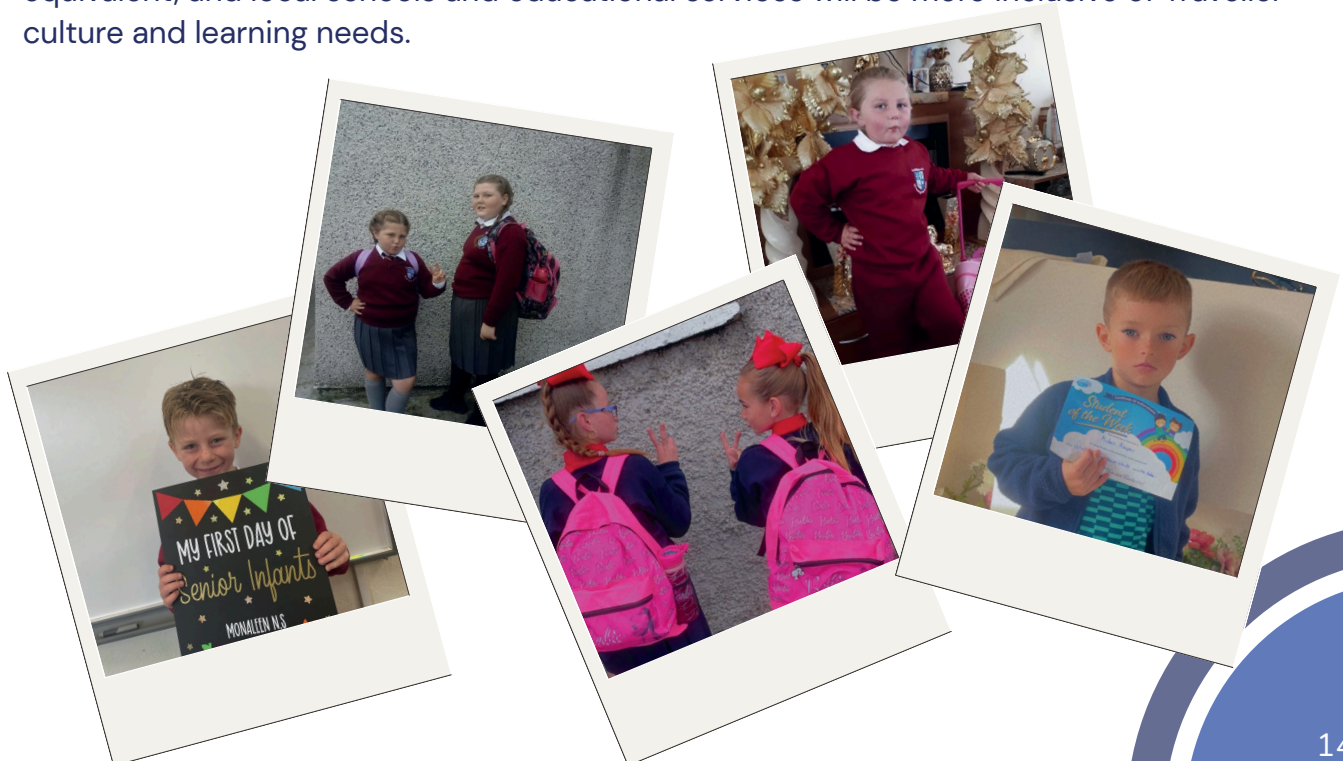


Representatives of the Limerick Traveller Community with Joe O'Brien, Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development

During planning sessions for the Strategic Plan, LTN members shared personal stories of struggling to be heard by schools and of children's talents being overlooked. Nevertheless, they also shared success stories, like Travellers returning to education as adults or young people finding supportive teachers. Such stories prove that change is possible. This strand of the plan focuses on ensuring Traveller children get the support and respect they need to thrive in education, and that Traveller parents are empowered to engage confidently with schools.

Goal:

By 2030, significantly more Travellers in Limerick will complete secondary education or equivalent, and local schools and educational services will be more inclusive of Traveller culture and learning needs.



Strategic Priorities & Actions

1

Priority 1: Increase Traveller retention and achievement in schools – Support Traveller children to stay in school and achieve their full potential.

Action 1.1: Homework and after-school support

- Establish an Afterschool Study Hub for Traveller children (primary and secondary) in Limerick, providing homework help, tutoring, and a quiet study space. This addresses the lack of after-school clubs noted by 52% of families.
- LTN will partner with local schools and community organisations to run the Afterschool Hub.

Action 1.2: Mentoring and role models

- Develop a Traveller Student Mentoring programme. Older Traveller students or young adults who have completed school will mentor younger students (particularly during the transition from primary to secondary, when dropout risk is high). They will meet regularly for encouragement, help with challenges and inspiration from someone of similar background who succeeded.

Action 1.3: Attendance and retention initiative

- Work with schools and the Educational Welfare Service (TESS in Tusla) to closely monitor attendance of Traveller pupils. If a student starts missing a lot of days, LTN (through the Education Working Group) will intervene early. This could be by visiting the family to understand issues, advocating with the school or connecting the family to relevant supports (like transport or learning assessments). Our aim is to reduce early school leaving by catching problems before a student drops out.

PRIDE EVENT 2025





Priority 2: Cultural inclusion and anti-discrimination in education – Make schools more welcoming for Travellers.

Action 2.1: Traveller culture in the school curriculum

- Advocate with local schools to implement the upcoming Traveller Culture and History in Education curriculum (as soon as it is available from the Department of Education). LTN will offer to support schools in Limerick by connecting them with Traveller speakers, cultural artefacts and lesson ideas so that Traveller culture is visibly included. We aim for all schools with Traveller students in Limerick to hold at least one Traveller culture event or lesson series per year (such as Traveller Pride Week).

Action 2.2: Anti-bias training for teachers

- Lobby for and facilitate teacher training on Traveller cultural awareness and anti-discrimination. The TEC research showed that bias (conscious or unconscious) among educators contributes to Traveller children feeling unwelcome. LTN will collaborate with education partners (like the TED Project at Mary Immaculate College) to deliver workshops for teachers and principals in Limerick schools. We will share findings like “56% of Traveller secondary students reported discrimination” to underscore the need for training.
- Success will be measured by the number of schools that participate (target: at least 5 schools per year) and improved feedback from Traveller families regarding their interactions with their children’s school.

Action 2.3: Parent–School bridging

- Create a network of Traveller Parent Liaisons. These will be Travellers who act as a link between other Traveller families and schools. They can accompany parents to parent-teacher meetings if requested, help parents understand school policies or how to raise issues, and help schools communicate in a culturally appropriate way. This will empower parents to engage more and ensure schools hear from Traveller families. The Education Working Group will organise training for the liaisons and coordinate with school Home–School Liaison officers.



3

Priority 3: Alternative pathways and second-chance education – Expand opportunities for Travellers outside the traditional school system.

Action 3.1: Youthreach and apprenticeships promotion

- Many young Travellers who leave secondary school early are not aware of alternatives like Youthreach, apprenticeship or training programmes. LTN will run an annual open day in collaboration with Youthreach Limerick, LCETB (Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board) and local employers to showcase these options. We will use success stories of Travellers who completed apprenticeships (through the Traveller Apprenticeship Incentivisation Programme) to encourage uptake.

Action 3.2: Adult education and family learning

- Work with LCETB to set up community-based adult education classes, such as literacy, numeracy and personal development, in Traveller communities. These could be held at local community centres or the LTN space.
- By 2030, our goal is to have at least 20 Traveller adults completing QQI Level 3–4 courses. This not only benefits those adults but also creates a culture of lifelong learning that influences children.

Action 3.3: Early Years engagement

- Advocate for Traveller participation in early childhood care and education. We will collaborate with the Limerick Childcare Committee to increase the enrolment of Traveller toddlers in quality preschools. As an action, LTN will identify any barriers (cost, transport, bias) keeping Traveller children out of preschools and work to address them (e.g., securing sponsored places or spaces in community early years services).
- Early education lays the groundwork for later success. By pursuing these priorities and actions, LTN aims to close the education gap. We will know we are on the right track when we see more Traveller children finishing Leaving Certificate or equivalent, improved satisfaction of Traveller parents with schools and schools proactively including Traveller culture.
- Education is a long-term investment. Many actions here will show results beyond 2030 but over these 5 years we want to plant the seeds for generational change in Limerick’s Traveller community.

Strand 2: Mental Health



TRAVELLER AFTER TRAVELLER DYING DOESN'T SEEM TO MATTER BECAUSE WE STILL DON'T HAVE SUPPORTS OR SERVICES. AT THIS RATE, THERE WON'T BE MANY TRAVELLERS LEFT.



Why This Matters

The community's voice has been clear: Mental health is the number one priority for LTN's work. This reflects an alarming reality. Travellers in Ireland face a mental health crisis, with suicide rates several times higher than the general population and widespread experiences of depression, anxiety and grief.

In Limerick, Traveller families have endured multiple tragedies related to poor mental health. Contributing factors include the stresses of daily discrimination, unemployment, poor accommodation conditions, substance misuse issues and inter-generational trauma. As highlighted in our education research, ongoing social pressure and exclusion take a toll on mental health, creating "a deepened sense of hopelessness" for many and driving determination to seek better futures for their children.

Community members often recount experiences of being treated poorly by services or feeling embarrassed to seek help, which points to both stigma and a lack of culturally inclusive mental health services. Despite this, there is a growing awareness that "it's okay not to be okay" and a hunger for support. The survey's finding that mental health is the top concern indicates that Travellers want more resources for mental wellbeing and suicide prevention. LTN has already taken steps in this area: Several members completed training in SafeTALK (suicide prevention) and Mental Health First Aid. Yet, much more needs to be done to build a supportive environment where Travellers can openly address mental health and access services without barriers.

Goal:

By 2030, improve mental health outcomes in the Traveller community by increasing access to culturally appropriate supports, reducing stigma and strengthening community resilience to prevent suicide and psychological distress.

The easiest way to do this is to have members of the Traveller community fully trained and employed in the area of supporting improved mental health within the Traveller community and better access to services through a peer support worker model.



Strategic Priorities & Actions

1

Priority 1: Community-based mental health supports – Bring mental health services and supports into Traveller communities in an accessible way.

“WITHOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND PEACE OF MIND, YOU HAVE NOTHING. SOME TRAVELLERS, GOD LOVE THEM, CARRY AN AWFUL BURDEN OF GRIEF AND WITHOUT THE RIGHT HELP.... IT JUST EATS AWAY AT THEM.”

Action 1.1: Traveller Mental Health Peer Support Worker

- Advocate for funding to enable the appointment of a dedicated Traveller Mental Peer Support Worker in Limerick (within the HSE or a partnering NGO). This person will be from the Traveller community and will work to connect individual Travellers with mental health services, facilitate appointments and provide follow-up.
- Success would be having this role in place by 2027, bridging the gap between mental health services and Travellers.

Action 1.2: “Mental Health Monday” drop-in clinics

- Starting in 2026, LTN will host monthly drop-in sessions in Traveller-populated areas (like Southill or Ballinacurra Weston) where people can come for a private chat about mental health. At each session, a mental health professional and a trusted Traveller peer (one of our trained mental health first aiders) will be available. They will offer on-the-spot support, information and referrals. These clinics normalise seeking help, in a familiar setting with community members involved. We aim to engage 120 Travellers per year through this informal approach.

Action 1.3: Culturally appropriate counselling services

- Partner with existing counselling services (for example, Pieta House or local family resource centres and Traveller Counselling Service) to develop culturally appropriate counselling for Travellers. LTN will facilitate cultural awareness training for counsellors and therapists and, if demand is high, explore establishing a dedicated counselling initiative for Travellers in Limerick. We will measure progress by tracking how many Travellers are referred to or accessing counselling each year (target: increase by 50% from baseline by 2030).



Priority 2: Suicide prevention and crisis response – Tackle the high suicide rate and support those in crisis.

Action 2.1: Community “Safe Spaces”

- In response to community tragedies, LTN will organise safe spaces for conversation and healing. For example, if there is a suicide or loss, LTN (through the Mental Health Working Group and in consultation with the Traveller Primary Health Care Programme) will quickly set up a healing circle or community meeting, bringing in a counsellor or therapist to allow people to share feelings and get support. Longer-term, we plan to form a Traveller Bereavement Support Group that meets regularly, since many Travellers carry unresolved grief.

Action 2.2: Suicide prevention training

- Expand training so that at least one person on every Traveller site or in each family network is trained in basic suicide prevention (such as SafeTALK or ASIST).
- By 20230, we want at least 20 additional Traveller men and women trained. LTN will coordinate these trainings annually, working with the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention and using peer outreach to recruit participants (especially young men, who are a high-risk group often missing from such initiatives).

Action 2.3: Crisis response protocol

- Develop a simple Community Crisis Response Protocol in collaboration with local services. This will be a plan that if a Traveller individual is in a mental health crisis (e.g., suicidal ideation or severe distress), LTN and community members know what to do and who to call immediately. We will establish direct lines of communication with crisis teams (such as emergency psychiatric services) and ensure they understand the context to respond effectively. We will also explore a “buddy system” where the LTN Mental Health Peer Support Worker can accompany a person in crisis to hospital or appointments, so they are not alone.

**THERE IS TOO MUCH
LEFT UNSAID IN
OUR COMMUNITY.**



3

Priority 3: Reducing Stigma and building resilience – Create an environment where talking about mental health is encouraged and community resilience is strengthened.

Action 3.1: Mental Health awareness campaign

- Participate actively in the annual National Traveller Mental Health Awareness Week. Activities may include storytelling evenings (with Travellers sharing their experiences of coping and recovery), information sessions on depression and anxiety (in plain language), and fun family events that incorporate mental wellness themes. We will use culturally relevant messaging, drawing on traditional Traveller values of family support and faith as strengths to combat stigma about seeking help.

Action 3.2: Men's and women's wellbeing groups

- Responding to the identified gap in gender-specific support (76% want women's groups, 65% want men's groups), LTN will help establish a Traveller Women's Circle and a Traveller Men's Group that meet regularly. While these groups will be offered social activities (crafts, sports, outings), a key aspect will be providing a space to talk about stress, life and mental health in a comfortable setting. We will partner with the Traveller Primary Health Care Programme to occasionally have health workers attend the groups for informal chats. By creating separate safe spaces for women and men, we hope to break down the reluctance some have in discussing mental health.

Action 3.3: Youth resilience programmes

- Work with local youth services (for example, Our Lady of Lourdes) to implement programmes that build resilience among Traveller youth. For example, support the delivery of the MindOut mental health programme in alternative education settings or a custom peer-led workshop series for young Travellers (perhaps led by the older youth mentors from the Youth strand). Given that discrimination and bullying often damage young Travellers' self-esteem, these programmes will teach coping skills, positive identity and where to get help.
- Our goal is that by 2030, positive mental health activities will be a routine part of activities at any Traveller youth project in Limerick and that members of the Traveller community will be fully trained and employed to be Mental health support workers using a peer model of support under the umbrella of LTN.
- Through these actions, LTN will strive to ensure that no Traveller in Limerick has to struggle alone with mental health difficulties. We want a community where it is as acceptable to seek help for anxiety or depression as it is for a physical illness. Progress will be reflected in more people accessing support earlier, community members confidently discussing mental health, and ultimately, fewer lives lost to suicide.
- This is a challenging and sensitive journey but by facing it together as a community, we can save lives and foster healing.



Strand 3: Accommodation

“EVERY SINGLE PERSON, NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE OR WHERE THEY COME FROM, DESERVES A ROOF OVER THEIR HEAD AND A SAFE PLACE THEY GET TO CALL HOME.”

Why This Matters

“Home” is a fundamental need yet many Traveller families in Limerick still live in inadequate, overcrowded or unsafe conditions and Travellers face higher levels of homelessness. The Traveller community’s accommodation crisis underpins many other issues. Without stable, culturally appropriate quality housing or halting sites, families face health hazards, children’s education suffers (no quiet place to study, frequent moves), and overall stress levels skyrocket. In fact, research tells us that chronic poor accommodation leads to overcrowded living conditions, financial strain, and a deep sense of hopelessness among Travellers which in turn contributes to mental health struggles.

LTN members have shared stories of large families squeezed into tiny trailers without proper facilities, of young couples unable to get on the housing list, and of eviction threats from unofficial sites. In our strategic planning workshops, accommodation was identified as a cross-cutting issue. It affects health, education, employment and community dignity, so therefore it must be a strand in the Strategic Plan.

Limerick City and County Council’s Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) has fallen short in delivery, with several halting site upgrades or new builds delayed or unfulfilled. Many Traveller families remain on housing waiting lists for years. Others live in standard housing but can face harassment from neighbours or isolation from their community. Additionally, some Traveller-specific accommodations, like group housing schemes, suffer from poor maintenance. Overcrowding is common and multiple generations often live under one roof. Such conditions are not acceptable in a modern city. Travellers, as Irish citizens, have a right to safe, culturally appropriate accommodation. This strand of the plan focuses on both advocacy for systemic change and practical supports for families navigating the housing system.

Goal:

By 2030, improve the living conditions of Traveller families in Limerick by ensuring Travellers have access to high quality, culturally appropriate accommodation with the choice to live in quality serviced halting sites, group housing or social housing.

This will happen by lobbying for delivery of the long- promised TAP and equality in accessing all accommodation, including private rentals and putting an end to roadside stays and homelessness. All Traveller families should have access to decent accommodation that meets their needs, whether that’s a serviced halting site, group housing, or social housing with support.

Strategic Priorities & Actions

1

Priority 1: Advocate for Traveller-specific accommodation delivery – Hold Limerick City and County Council accountable to provide and upgrade Traveller accommodation as per its own Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP).

“ I MEAN, IS THE TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME A FAIRY TALE, YOU WOULD WONDER? ”

Action 1.1: Monitoring the TAP

- LTN’s Accommodation Working Group will actively track Limerick City and County Council’s progress on its statutory Traveller Accommodation Programme 2024–2028. We will obtain council reports (through Freedom of Information if necessary) and publish a “Traveller Accommodation Scorecard” each year, showing targets vs. actual units delivered (new halting site bays, group houses, refurbishments, etc.). Any shortfalls will be highlighted in meetings with local officials and through media. By shining a light publicly, we will increase pressure to deliver. For instance, if 10 new bays were promised by 2026 and only 2 are delivered, we will highlight this and lobby for catch-up plans.

Action 1.2: Representation on local forums

- Ensure strong Traveller representation on the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) and any relevant council forums. LTN will nominate experienced members to sit on these committees (or support external Traveller reps) so that Traveller voices are at the table when accommodation decisions are made. We will prepare our representatives with data and community input before each meeting. A specific action is to push for halting site upgrades (e.g. sanitation facilities, play areas) by bringing photographic evidence of poor conditions to committee meetings and inviting officials to accompany us on site visits.

Action 1.3: Campaign for culturally appropriate options

- Run a local advocacy campaign titled “A Place to Call Home – Travellers in Limerick 2027” focusing on the need for culturally appropriate accommodation. This will involve public awareness (stories of families in overcrowded sites), engaging local councillors (especially those who will vote on land use and budgets), and possibly demonstrations if commitments are not met. We will measure success by whether specific projects (like a new group housing scheme or a transient site for visiting Travellers) are initiated during the plan period.

2

Priority 2: Support Traveller families in accessing culturally appropriate accommodation of their choice whether this be standard housing, group housing, living on sites or living in rural areas – Provide practical assistance to Travellers seeking accommodation or facing accommodation issues.

Action 2.1: Housing advocacy clinic.

- Set up a monthly Housing Advocacy Clinic in partnership with Exchange House Ireland's family support and crisis intervention service and local housing NGOs such as Novas and Focus Ireland and Community Law and Mediation. At this clinic, Travellers can get help with filling housing application forms, writing letters, understanding their rights (under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act), or reporting discrimination in renting. LTN staff will follow up on cases. For example, if a family has been on the list for an excessively long time, we will help them request a review. The aim is to empower families with knowledge and advocacy so they are not lost in the system.

Action 2.2: Emergency response for homeless Travellers

- Develop a protocol with homeless services so that if a Traveller family becomes homeless (for example, evicted from an unofficial site or fleeing domestic violence), they are quickly accommodated in a culturally sensitive way and not split up. LTN will work with the Council, Adapt House and homeless organisations to secure family-friendly emergency accommodation (avoiding scenarios like Traveller families being placed in B&Bs). We will designate an LTN contact person for homeless services to call when a Traveller case arises, to assist with communication and support.





3

Priority 3: Improve conditions on halting sites and group schemes – Ensure existing Traveller accommodations are brought to decent standards.

Action 3.1: Site condition surveys.

- Conduct an LTN Site Audit of all Traveller-specific sites and group schemes in Limerick. This will document issues like broken facilities, inadequate electricity, pest problems, lack of safe play spaces, etc. We will compile these findings and submit them to the Council with clear asks for maintenance or upgrades (e.g., fix public lighting, provide waste collection, install fire safety equipment).
- Our benchmark is that by 2030, all official sites in Limerick should meet basic health and safety standards (no sewage leaks, fire safety in place, etc.)

Action 3.2: Clean-up and minor works days

- While major infrastructure needs Council action, LTN can organise Community Clean-Up days on sites to empower residents to improve their environment, in coordination with council waste services. We will also pursue small grants (from local businesses or through the Council) to do minor improvement projects.

Action 3.3: Address overcrowding

- Identify families in severely overcrowded situations and prioritise finding solutions. Through our clinics and site audits, we will keep a list of the most urgent cases (such as multiple families sharing one trailer). LTN will advocate for these cases individually, either by lobbying the Council to make a housing offer or seeking mobile homes or temporary units as interim measures. We won't accept that families languish in unsafe crowded conditions indefinitely.
- A target is to reduce the average number of persons per caravan on Limerick sites, and eliminate instances of 3+ families sharing one bay, by the end of the plan period.
- Housing advocacy often involves slow, frustrating work, but LTN will persist because safe and adequate accommodation is a human right. By 2030, we expect to see tangible improvements: new or refurbished Traveller accommodation in use and community members reporting better living conditions.
- Ultimately, ensuring Travellers have a secure home is a matter of dignity and rights, and it will uplift the whole community.

I WORK IN A PUBLIC SERVICE AND I NEVER FAIL TO BE SHOCKED AT THE DREADFUL STANDARDS TRAVELLER HAVE TO ENDURE WHEN IT COMES TO ACCOMMODATION. AS A COUNTRY, WE HAVE TO DO BETTER.

STRAND 4: YOUTH, FAMILIES & CHILDREN

Why This Matters

The future of the Traveller community lies with our children and youth and, right now, young Traveller people in Limerick face many challenges that prevent them from reaching their potential. Aside from education issues (covered in the Education strand), Traveller children and youth often contend with limited recreational opportunities, early school leaving, unemployment and exposure to negative influences like drugs or crime in some areas.

One of the clearest messages from our community survey and workshops was the absence of positive outlets for young Travellers. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) said there are no youth clubs or activities for their children in their area, and a similar proportion noted the lack of playgrounds or safe play spaces. Providing structured youth work is essential not only for fun and personal development, but also for building confidence, cultural pride and leadership skills among Traveller youth.

Another concern is the inclusion of young Traveller men and boys. These are often the hardest to engage as they may leave school early, hang around with nothing to do, and be at higher risk for mental health issues or substance misuse. If not reached with positive supports, some fall into harmful paths.

LTN is determined to make youth a major focus, ensuring there are programmes that appeal to both boys and girls, and that Traveller youth have a voice in matters that concern them. By empowering our children and young people, we not only improve their individual futures but also cultivate the next generation of Traveller leaders and professionals.

Goal:

By 2030, Traveller children and teenagers in Limerick will have access to regular youth activities, supportive mentors, and opportunities that enhance their skills and well-being. We aim to see more Traveller youth completing education or training, participating in community life, training as youth workers and being confident in their identity.



Strategic Priorities & Actions

1

Priority 1: Establish Traveller-friendly youth Programmes and spaces – Create dedicated youth work initiatives that engage young Travellers.

Action 1.1: Establish a “Traveller Youth Club”

- With support from Limerick Youth Service or Foróige, LTN will set up a weekly Traveller Youth Club. This club will rotate between a few key areas (Southill and Castletroy) so as to include youth from different sites. Activities will be co-designed with the youth but will include music, sports, art, trips, and life skills workshops. Importantly, it will be led by Traveller youth workers or volunteers whenever possible, to ensure cultural relevance.
- Our indicator of success: at least 30 consistent Traveller youth participants by the second year, and personal development plans in place for each (to track skills gained, etc.)

Action 1.2: Secure a safe and accessible youth space

- Work towards establishing a permanent youth space (or “youth hub”) in the eventual LTN base. In the interim, negotiate dedicated time slots for Traveller youth groups at existing youth centres or sports halls. We will also address practical barriers, such as arranging transport for those from sites on club nights, since lack of transport often hinders participation.

Action 1.3: Culturally affirming activities

- Make cultural identity a positive part of youth programmes. For example, start an annual Traveller Youth Arts project where youths create art, music, or a short film about their heritage and issues they care about. Also, include sessions on Traveller history and rights as part of the club activities to build pride. As noted in the education research, youth who engaged in cultural discussions had better self-esteem. We want our young people to see that being a Traveller is something to be proud of.

“
**IT JUST FEELS LIKE
TRAVELLER BOYS AND
MEN ARE ALWAYS ON THE
OUTSIDE.**
”

2

Priority 2: Keep young Travellers in education, training or employment – Prevent youth from becoming “NEET” (not in education, employment, or training).

Action 2.1: Youth mentorship and role models (Buddy System)

- Build on the mentoring action from Education (Priority 1.2) by formalising a “Buddy” system: Each Traveller student in 5th or 6th class and those in early secondary who wish, will be paired with a slightly older mentor (a senior cycle student or young adult) who can guide them. Additionally, identify and celebrate role models. For example, invite a Traveller who completed college or runs a business to speak to youth groups or schools. Hearing success stories can motivate teens to stay in school or pursue careers they might not have considered before.

Action 2.2: Youth employment pathways

- Partner with employment services (like LES/Intreo and PAUL Partnership) to create a Traveller Youth Internship scheme. Advocate for a small number of internship or apprenticeship slots each year specifically targeted at young Travellers (in fields like construction, mechanics, care work, etc., aligned with their interests). LTN will support participants during these placements (providing a mentor, helping with gear or transport costs).
- We aim to place at least 4 youths per year into such opportunities as a bridge to long-term employment.
- For young Travellers who have already left school early (teenagers 16–17 with no formal engagement), initiate a Youth Outreach project. This would involve a street outreach youth worker (ideally a Traveller) who connects with disengaged young people on sites or known hangouts. The goal is to draw them into some structured activity – whether it’s enrolling in Youthreach, joining the youth club or even short courses (such as driving lessons). We will track how many out-of-school youths we manage to re-engage (target: at least 10 by 2030).





3

Priority 3: Inclusion, leadership and voice – Ensure Traveller youth are included in broader youth services and have a say in issues that affect them.

Action 3.1: Cultural inclusion training for youth services

- Just as schools need anti-bias training, so do mainstream youth services. LTN will collaborate with Limerick Youth Service and others to provide Traveller culture awareness sessions for their youth workers. This will help make existing clubs and programmes more inviting for Traveller teens. We'll know progress is made if we see an increase in Traveller attendance in general youth programmes (like sports teams, Scouts, etc.)

Action 3.2: Youth voice in LTN and beyond

- Establish a Traveller Youth Council/Forum under LTN. This will be a panel of young people (ages 16–25) who meet quarterly to discuss issues and advise the LTN Steering Group from a youth perspective. They will also be supported to send representatives to external youth fora (such as Comhairle na nÓg), ensuring Traveller representation. By involving youth in leadership, we nurture their skills and ensure our strategies remain relevant to their needs. A concrete outcome could be a youth-written addendum to this Strategic Plan each year, reporting on progress from their viewpoint.

Action 3.3: Engaging young men

- Because including young Traveller men was highlighted as a gap, we will create specific initiatives to draw them in. For example, start a Traveller Boys Sports Initiative by partnering with Limerick Sports Partnership to run a sports league (soccer, boxing, etc.) for Traveller youth. Sports can be a hook that brings in the young men, after which we can engage them in other conversations (health, jobs, etc.). Likewise, identify male champions (older cousins, community figures) who can encourage the reluctant ones to join activities.
- We will measure success by the participation rates of young men in our programmes (aiming for gender balance in the youth club and a functioning men's group as noted in the Mental Health strand).
- By focusing on Youth, LTN is investing in both the present well-being and the future leadership of the Traveller community. We expect that through these efforts, idle hours will turn into productive activities. A teenager who might have been hanging around bored could instead be learning a trade or practicing a sport. The Youth strand will also yield other valuable outcomes: friendships, confidence, and a sense of belonging for young Travellers who often feel marginalised.
- Perhaps most importantly, by 2030 we want to see Traveller youth proud of who they are and hopeful about their future, confident that their community and LTN have their back.



STRAND 5: DISCRIMINATION



THERE IS A BIG FOCUS ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MIGRANTS, AS WELL THERE SHOULD BE. WE WOULD LIKE PEOPLE TO START SEEING THAT THIS IS SOMETHING TRAVELLERS DEAL WITH IN THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES TOO. DISCRIMINATION IN IRELAND ISN'T A NEW THING.

Why This Matters

Discrimination against Travellers is a pervasive reality that underlies all the other issues. From being denied entry to pubs and shops, to facing prejudice in schools and workplaces, Travellers in Limerick (as elsewhere in Ireland) experience daily acts of bias and exclusion. This constant discrimination damages self-worth, limits access to opportunities and contributes to poor mental health.

Tackling discrimination is essential for creating an environment where the other strands (education, health, accommodation and youth) can truly succeed. While it was ranked lower by some in the survey in terms of “immediate priority”, likely because many families focus on urgent needs like housing and health first, the community clearly voiced that ending discrimination is a fundamental goal. In fact, a key part of LTN’s vision is for Travellers to be “equal partners” in society, meaning no more second-class treatment.

Discrimination takes many forms: individual prejudice (name-calling, social exclusion), institutional bias (Travellers being overlooked for jobs or accommodation), and structural racism (laws or policies that disproportionately harm Travellers). Examples include young people hiding their identity on job applications for fear of rejection, families not disclosing their address to get a viewing for a rental house, and the pain of children hearing slurs in school. There is also the legacy of historical discrimination, from the Commission on Itinerancy’s assimilation policies decades ago to today’s internet hate speech. However, there are signs of progress: Traveller ethnicity was officially recognised by the Irish State in 2017, and anti-discrimination laws (like the Equal Status Acts) offer some protection.

The challenge is ensuring these laws and policies actually translate into respect and fair treatment on the ground in Limerick.

Goal:

By 2030, reduce the instances of discrimination against Travellers in Limerick through awareness, advocacy, and enforcement of rights. We want to increase acceptance of Traveller identity in public life so that Travellers feel safe and proud to identify themselves, and have equal access to opportunities and services.

Strategic Priorities & Actions

1

Priority 1: Awareness and advocacy campaigns – Change hearts and minds in the wider community and empower Travellers to stand up against discrimination.

Action 1.1: “Travellers in Limerick – Know Us” campaign

- Develop a visibility campaign featuring real local Travellers – workers, students, parents – to put a human face to the community and break down stereotypes. This could involve posters, short video stories shared on social media and local radio slots. We will time this around Traveller Pride Week each year, but also maintain a presence throughout. The campaign’s message: Travellers are contributing members of Limerick with hopes and rights like everyone else. Changing public perception can reduce casual discrimination and create allies.

Action 1.2: Schools and youth outreach (Anti-Bullying)

- Collaborate with schools to address discrimination at an early age. Building on the education strand, we will support anti-bullying programmes that specifically address anti-Traveller bullying. For example, deliver workshops for Transition Year students in Limerick about Traveller culture and the harm of discrimination.

Action 1.3: Empowerment through rights education

- Conduct “Know Your Rights” sessions for the Traveller community. Many Travellers do not report discrimination because they feel nothing will be done or they are unaware of legal protections. LTN will host information sessions (in plain language) about how to make a complaint under the Equal Status Act if refused service, or how to approach the Workplace Relations Commission for discrimination cases. We will look to collaborate with the Limerick Community Law and Mediation Service on this.
- A success metric: an increase in formal complaints or cases taken by Travellers in Limerick. This is not because we want more incidents, but because it means people are asserting their rights when incidents occur.



2

Priority 2: Challenge institutional and systemic discrimination – Ensure organisations and services in Limerick are inclusive and fair in their dealings with Travellers.

Action 2.1: Anti-discrimination training for service providers

- Urge and assist key public-facing organisations to undergo anti-discrimination and cultural competency training. This includes healthcare staff (hospitals, clinics), Gardaí, social welfare and Intreo office staff, and local authority customer service teams. LTN will advocate through the Local Traveller Interagency Group and Local Community Development Committee to make this a priority. We can help coordinate the training content, involving Traveller trainers if possible. The intended outcome is better day-to-day interactions – e.g., Travellers being treated with respect at clinics and offices, and frontline staff recognising unconscious biases.

Action 2.2: Policy input and monitoring

- LTN will seek to influence local policies so they consider Traveller needs and do not inadvertently discriminate. For example, input to Limerick’s development plans or social inclusion strategies, ensuring Travellers are mentioned and consulted. We will monitor any new regulations (like tenant selection policies for housing, or school admissions policies) for discriminatory impact. If we identify an issue (like a rule that effectively excludes Travellers), we will advocate for change, backed where possible by data or legal arguments. By being proactive, we prevent institutional discrimination before it happens.





3

Priority 3: Promote Traveller representation and voice in public life – Combat discrimination by increasing Traveller visibility in decision-making roles and public forums.

Action 3.1: Political participation (voter registration & candidacy).

- Building on the voter registration drive we previously evaluated, we will intensify efforts to get Travellers registered and voting. Additionally, we will encourage and support Travellers to run for local election or join community policing fora, school boards, etc. When Travellers are in positions of influence, policies are less likely to ignore or mistreat our community.
- By 2030, we would love to see at least one Traveller candidate stand in the local elections and an increase in Traveller membership on various boards/committees in Limerick (such as school boards of management, youth committees, etc.). LTN will provide training in leadership and public speaking to interested community members to facilitate this.

Action 3.2: Celebrating Traveller culture publicly.

- Work with Limerick City and County Council and cultural organisations to include Traveller culture in mainstream events. This could include having Traveller music or storytelling at the annual St. Patrick's Festival, or an exhibit during Riverfest. When the wider public experiences Traveller culture as part of the city's heritage, it normalises our presence and reduces "othering." We will propose at least one such inclusion each year.
- A notable target event is to successfully advocate for a Traveller Pride float or representation in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Limerick by 2027, which would be a visible statement of inclusion.

Action 3.3: Community dialogue

- Initiate a Dialogue Series between Travellers and the settled community. This could involve panel discussions or community meetings where misconceptions can be addressed in a respectful setting. For instance, host a Q&A with local Gardaí and Travellers to build understanding. These dialogues can chip away at prejudice by fostering human connections.
- Ultimately, success in this strand means seeing fewer incidents of discrimination reported anecdotally by our community. It means a young Traveller can walk into a shop without expecting hostility, or apply for a job without hiding their identity. It is hard to measure attitudes, but we will use surveys to gauge if Travellers feel any increase in acceptance.
- Every action in this strand feeds into a larger movement, the fight for equality and respect. LTN will ensure that Limerick is part of that movement, working so that "Traveller rights are human rights" isn't just a slogan, but a lived reality in our city.

How are we going to make the LTN Strategic Plan a reality?

Having set out our strategic objectives, LTN is committed to turning this plan into action through a clear implementation structure and regular monitoring. This section outlines how we will carry out the plan over 2026–2030, who is responsible for what, and how we will track progress and remain accountable.



→ Steering Group oversight:

The LTN Steering Group (established in 2025) will take overall responsibility for driving the Strategic Plan forward. The Steering Group will meet monthly in the first year (2026) and at least every two months thereafter to review implementation. One meeting each quarter will be dedicated largely to strategic plan progress, where each Working Group reports on their strand. The Steering Group members (including Traveller representatives and partner reps from Exchange House, PAUL Partnership, etc.) will use these meetings to troubleshoot challenges, approve any adjustments to actions, and ensure resources are properly allocated. Exchange House staff (the LTN Coordinator) will act as a secretariat in the early phase to help schedule meetings and keep minutes, until LTN develops its own capacity for these tasks.

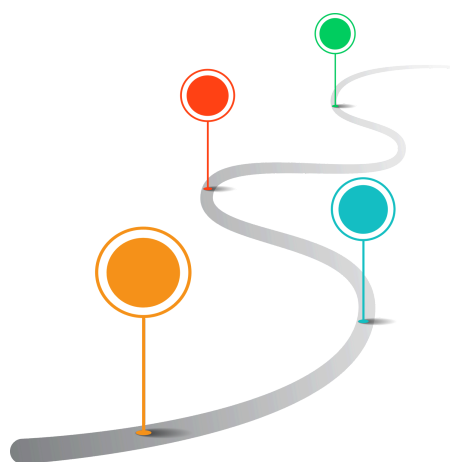
→ Working Group action plans:

Each of the 5 Working Groups (Education, Accommodation, Mental Health, Youth and Discrimination) will develop a detailed annual work plan based on the strategic actions listed in this Strategic Plan. Right after this Strategic Plan is launched (end of 2025), each group will convene to prioritise year-one actions, set timelines, and assign responsibilities among members.

For example, the Education group might set Q1 2026 to start the homework club (Action 1.1). These work plans will be living documents reviewed at each working group meeting (expected monthly or bi-monthly). Working Groups will maintain simple progress logs (what's done, what's yet to do) to feed into Steering Group updates.

🕒 Timeline:

While this plan covers a 5-year span (2026–2030), many actions will start immediately in 2026. We will phase initiatives as follows:



→ Foundation (Late 2025):

Having set out our strategic objectives, LTN is committed to turning this plan into action through a clear implementation structure and regular monitoring. This section outlines how we will carry out the plan over 2026–2030, who is responsible for what, and how we will track progress and remain accountable.



→ Early Wins (2026):

Focus on actions that are achievable and build momentum. For example, establish the Homework Club and Youth Club pilots, hold the first mental health drop-in, complete the accommodation site audits, and launch the anti-discrimination “Know Us” media campaign. Also in 2026, make tangible progress on LTN’s own development. For example, design the LTN branding and logo.

→ Scale Up (2027–2030):

Build on pilots and early wins to expand programmes. For example, if the Traveller Youth Club had 30 youths in 2026, aim for two locations or more frequency by 2027. Use evaluation of year 1 to refine approaches. 2027 should also see significant advocacy outcomes (like commitments from the Council on accommodation, or improved school engagement stats). We aim to have the Traveller Mental Health Liaison position funded by 2027. By 2028, some deeper systemic changes should be underway, such as anti-bias training being standard in schools or services.



→ Review and Sustain (2030):

Conduct a comprehensive mid-2030 Strategic Plan Review to assess what has been achieved and what needs more work. This will involve community consultations (go back to the community with surveys or meetings to gather feedback – “Have you noticed improvements?”). The Steering Group will compile a progress report measuring outcomes against the original goals. 2030 will also be the year to secure sustainability. This means ensuring any projects that should continue (like the youth club and drop-in clinics) have funding beyond the plan period, and that LTN’s independence process is on a firm schedule. We will celebrate successes with the community and start planning for the next strategic phase (2030 onwards) based on lessons learned.



Roles and Responsibilities

Steering Group

Responsible for overall strategic oversight, resource allocation, high-level problem solving, external relationship management (e.g., with funders, authorities).

Specific tasks: approve annual work plans, produce annual progress report, ensure cross-strand coordination (for cross-cutting issues like “after-school hub” that involve Education and Youth).

Working Groups

Look after the day-to-day implementation of strand actions. Each Working Group will have a Chair or Coordinator (an LTN member) who convenes meetings and liaises with the Steering Group. Members take lead roles on specific actions (for example, one or two people might lead on organising the cultural awareness trainings in both Education and Discrimination strands). They are the champions pushing things on the ground and reporting issues up to Steering Group.

LTN staff

In addition to a part-time Coordinator, LTN will have 5 part-time paid workers, 2 of whom have community leadership roles. In terms of maximising resources, one LTN staff members should be assigned to each thematic Working Group.

Partners/Allies

While not responsible for delivery, partners like Exchange House Ireland, Limerick City Area Partnership, Limerick Council, HSE, etc., have agreed roles in supporting implementation. For instance, Exchange House Ireland will likely assist in funding applications or training provision; Limerick City Partnership might help with employment and social programmes; the Council is tasked with responding to accommodation advocacy actions. We will formalise these roles via written collaboration agreements where possible, or at least meeting with each key partner in early 2026 to agree on how they will assist with relevant actions.

Community Members

LTN will also delegate certain tasks to broader community volunteers or participants. For example, parent liaisons in schools, or youth mentors, who are not on a Working Group but contribute. The Steering Group and Working Groups will ensure these community contributors are supported (with training, small stipends for expenses if feasible, and recognition). This broad participation fosters the collective ownership of the LTN Strategic Plan

Monitoring and Evaluation

To keep the Strategic Plan on track, LTN will implement a simple Monitoring Framework:

1

For each action, we will define measurable indicators of success. We'll refine these into quantifiable targets where possible in the first year. e.g., "Number of Traveller students mentored = 10 by 2027" or "% of TAP commitments delivered = 80% by 2030".

2

A Mid-Term Review will be conducted in 2027. This will function as a temperature check to possibly re-prioritise or update actions based on what we learn in the first 18 months. If something isn't working, we'll adjust it rather than continue ineffectively. This review will involve another community survey or forum to gauge satisfaction.

3

Working Groups will report progress on these indicators quarterly to the Steering Group. We will use a traffic light system (Green = on track, Amber = some delay, Red = not achieved/obstacle) to flag status of actions.

4

The Steering Group will produce a short Annual Progress Report each year (2026 - 2030) to share with the community and stakeholders. This report will outline what has been done, results achieved (with data and community feedback), and highlight areas needing extra effort. We will invite an external observer (perhaps from a partner NGO or academia) to provide feedback on these reports for transparency.

5

In 2030, an End-of-Plan Evaluation will be done, ideally by an external evaluator, to objectively assess the impact of the plan. This will inform the next strategic planning cycle.





→ **Accountability**

LTN is accountable first and foremost to the Traveller community. Therefore, we will maintain open communication: quarterly community meetings where anyone can ask the Steering Group about progress, suggestion boxes at LTN events, and updates via a newsletter or Facebook page. We will not shy away from reporting both achievements and setbacks honestly.

Additionally, we are accountable to our supporters and funders. We will fulfil all reporting requirements for any grants, and demonstrate how resources are used effectively to advance the plan's goals.

→ **Risk Management**

We acknowledge potential risks to implementation such as a lack of funding for certain actions, burnout of volunteer members or external factors like policy changes. The Steering Group will maintain a risk register and discuss mitigation at meetings. For example, if a key partner pulls out, we find alternative allies or adjust the approach.

→ **Resourcing the Plan**

Many actions rely on volunteer effort and partnership support, but some will require funding (for venues, materials, possibly staff roles like the Liaison). LTN will develop a financial strategy with Exchange House's help, to map actions to potential funding sources (government grants, philanthropic grants like Rethink Ireland, etc.). We will actively fundraise and advocate for resources, leveraging the evidence from our community survey and research to make the case. Aiming to secure multi-annual funding for critical programmes (e.g., youth and mental health initiatives) will be a priority in the first year.

Final thoughts

This Strategic Plan is more than a document. It is a living roadmap owned by the Traveller community in Limerick. We have clear structures, timelines and the dedication to bring it to life. By monitoring our progress and remaining flexible to adapt, we will ensure the plan does not "sit on a shelf" but instead translates into real improvements.

Together, through collective effort and with support from our allies, we will move towards a stronger, more empowered Traveller community in Limerick by 2030. Our journey so far has shown what Travellers can achieve. Now, armed with this plan, our journey continues – towards equality, inclusion and a better future for all Traveller families in Limerick.



Thank you

Limerick Traveller Network has grown because of our determination to make sure that lives improve for every member of our community. On that journey we have help from many people. There a few in particular that we would like to thank for helping us to bring our first ever Strategic Plan to life:

- Exchange House Ireland: John O'Brien, Maria Carnicer, Kerry Cuskelly & Anita Pannell
- Limerick City Partnership: Michelle Hannan
- Media production: Greg Dillon
- Framework Research: Maria O'Dwyer

