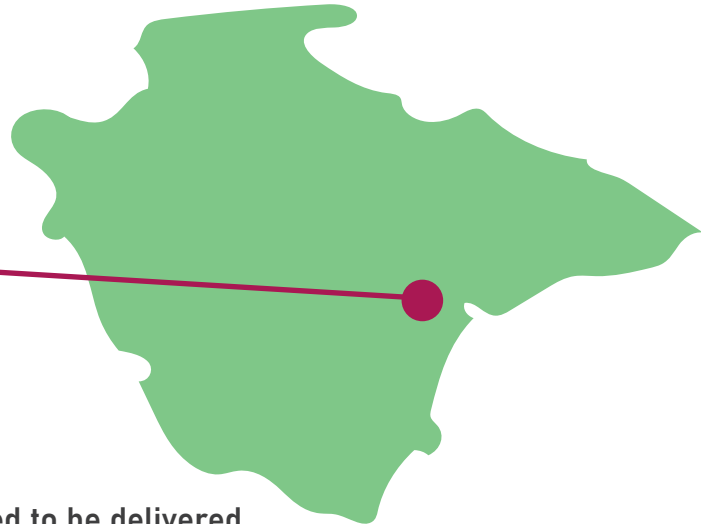
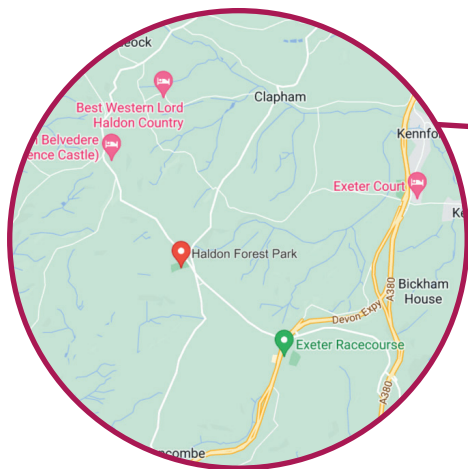




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PROJECT: GYPSIES, ROMA AND TRAVELLERS – FOCUSSED ON DISCUSSIONS AT HALDON RIDGE SITE IN HALDON FOREST



“

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IN A NUTSHELL...

The health issues affecting Gypsies, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities are complex. The work of the Devon Public Health Outreach Team has focussed on listening to and reflecting the views and issues of these communities based on conversations with people at the Haldon Ridge site in Haldon Forest site January– March 2023, including Angie Whitehead, Traveller Space Support Worker.

NEEDS, GAPS AND BARRIERS

- Mental health issues are prevalent in travelling communities which experience covert discrimination and sometimes direct abuse. Threat of eviction at short notice without knowing where they can access support or transient pitches is a continual worry
- Anecdotal evidence of a higher-than-average suicide rate – particularly men 25 –44 and over 75. Most families will have direct experience of the death by suicide of a relative
- Lack of understanding by ‘gatekeepers’ – particularly receptionists who have not had adequate training and e.g., expect that all people from travelling communities can read and write
- Expectations that travelling communities can travel to access health appointments – when the service may be miles and an expensive bus fare away.

COMMUNITY VISION – WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

GRT communities need and want to be heard and involved at every level of health service commissioning, from strategic planning to operational delivery, i.e. active inclusion and involvement rather than services planned ‘for’ them.

If travelling communities move off (or are evicted from) transient sites there needs to be consistency of healthcare for them between one healthcare provider and another in another area of the country.

ROLE OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH OUTREACH TEAM

The Outreach Team made several trips to the site in order to get to know the community and gain their trust. In those meetings they established the priority health needs of the community as Mental Health, Oral Health and Sexual Health.

Lindsay Rook, Community Services Manager of Exeter Core Mental Health was contacted, along with Dr Adam Morgan, Clinical Psychologist and visited the site to discuss mental health services.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Trust has been established between the Outreach Team and the communities on the site

A pilot mental health clinic for one afternoon per month at the site with Clinical Psychology final year students attending has been arranged, to start in March 2023

The Outreach Team has since this established that there is a need to include a domestic abuse services practitioner at the site. They are seeking ways of securing this service, as well as oral and sexual health support, before the Outreach Team project closes end March 2023

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS

Services need to be delivered at the GRT site, or via a mobile site, and by service providers who have taken time to build up a trusting relationship with the communities on the sites.

More Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion training explicitly about, and with, GRT communities, is needed for health professionals, in particular reception staff.

Further research should be commissioned into the mental health support needs of GRT communities.

Community Support by John Thornton of Devon Public Health Outreach Team. Snapshot Designed by Devon Communities Together.

