



EXCHANGE HOUSE
Travellers Service

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Submission re draft of second report by Ireland re

Health

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This submission is on behalf of Exchange House Travellers Service



Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Submission re draft of second report by Ireland with specific reference to

Health

On behalf of Exchange House Travellers Service, Dublin

Exchange House Travellers Service has been providing services to the Traveller community in the greater Dublin region since 1980. These services include Family Support and social work services, Youth Work services, Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and a range of education services.

Exchange House is making this submission to the second report by Ireland on the basis of research into the health needs of our target group, who would be the most marginalised Travellers in the Dublin area. The details of the Health Research with our client group were not intended of general publication, rather to inform the work of Exchange House and the Health Service Executive personnel with whom we work.

It may be helpful to the report to note the core recommendations arising out of the health needs research.

1. Accommodation is central to every facet of these clients; health needs and must be addressed urgently.
2. An interdisciplinary primary health care team is needed. This should not be a segregated health promotion unit in Exchange House, but an inter-agency network to ensure that provision for these clients is professionally monitored.
3. In relation to the health promotion aspects of its programmes, Exchange House family support services and personnel should be networked into this multidisciplinary team.
4. The team should include an advocacy service. All services as far as possible but particularly the advocacy service should include same-ethnic personnel who have had adequate pre-career training and ongoing professional development opportunities.
5. Experienced skilled personnel, and strategies appropriate to this vulnerable sector of the Traveller population should be

an integral part of every mainstream and Traveller targeted health service structure.

6. Anti-racism and interculturalism should inform all health care pre-career training and ongoing professional programmes, and specific modules on these topics should be mandatory.
7. Capacity building is a primary need in relation to promoting the wellbeing of these vulnerable clients.
8. The age and gender differentials that shape health needs should also determine targeted strategies to ensure that the needs of all sectors are met appropriately. This involves specific attention to mother and child welfare, family support programmes, and strategies to target men, youth and older people.
9. In order to meet the multiple, severe and intersecting needs of people such as these clients the development of appropriate and accessible specific health and social services must go on even as these key elements (advocacy services and capacity building strategies) are being developed and put in place.
10. Psychological health needs are the most severe types of need among this group; these require substantial research

It must be noted that the clients of Exchange House are not typical of the Traveller community in general, but represent a cohort of people who are extremely vulnerable and who do not tend to link into mainstream services without a significant level of support. Without targeted responses within the broad remit of the Traveller Health Strategy, the Exchange House clients would slip through the safety net normally provided by both the statutory and voluntary sectors working together.