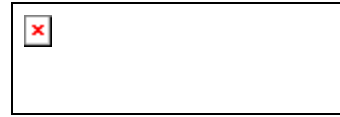




**National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project**  
**Proposed Strategic Plan**  
**2007-2010**

by  
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***Most people thinking about Suicide Signal and Share their Pain, they offer us opportunities to respond***

## ***Introduction***

Suicide is an issue which has been faced by many families over the last number of years including many Traveller families. Each year over 500 people take their lives in Ireland and the majority of these are young men under 35 years of age.

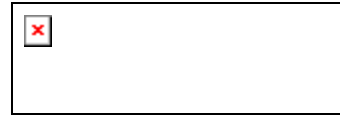
In 2004 when a number of groups came together out of concern about the perceived increase in the number of Traveller suicides, they knew there would be a long road ahead of them. They have continued along that road and now over three years later, they have finally reached the point where strategic actions for the next three years are being put into place. The employment of a worker to lead out this plan will ensure that for the next three years at least the issue of Traveller suicide will have a voice locally, regionally, and nationally and that Travellers' voices will be kept firmly on the agenda when it comes to the issue of suicide.

## ***Mission and Vision Statement***

The National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project (NTSAP) is a collaboration of Traveller organizations, the National Office of Suicide Prevention, Crosscare and service providers. The project seeks to develop and implement a community development approach to addressing the issue of suicide in the Traveller community through acting as a resource both to Traveller organizations and suicide related services in terms of raising their awareness on the issue of suicide in the Traveller community and promoting the development of initiatives to support suicide prevention, intervention and post vention, in a coordinated manner and in so doing to reduce the number of attempted and completed suicides in the Traveller community.

As stated the overall vision of the project is to reduce the number of completed suicides in the Traveller community over the next three years. To do this a community development approach is being used, the principles of which are

- Inclusion
- Anti Racist and anti sexist approach
- Working with people where they are at
- Treating people with whom we work with respect
- People have the right to identify their own needs and to work for change on their own behalf and on the behalf of their community



## ***Organisation Profile and History***

The National Traveller suicide Awareness Project began in 2004 when Travellers and Traveller organizations came together in response to their growing concern of the increase in completed suicide within the Travelling community.

The initial meeting of the working group consisted of members of Galway Travellers support group, The Parish of the Travelling people, Pavee Point, and Sligo Travellers Group. They agreed that there was a need to develop a culturally appropriate plan to address the issue of suicide within the Traveller community. Over the years, meetings and discussions were held with interested groups such as the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP), Console, Nexus, Psychiatrists working with Travellers and HSE Suicide Resource Officers. Following a meeting between the Traveller Suicide Working Group (TSWG) and NOSP, a working group approached Crosscare to develop a community development response to the issue of suicide which seeks to have an impact on the wider Traveller Community.

In 2006 an application was submitted by the working group to the National Office for Suicide Prevention to fund a worker for a National Traveller suicide Awareness Project. This application was successful and a three year funding commitment was given. The post is being hosted by Crosscare.

Crosscare is the social care agency of the Archdiocese of Dublin. Formerly known as the Catholic Social Services Conference, it was set up in 1941 in response to the complex problem of poverty in the city at that time. Over time needs have changed. However, Crosscare's mission statement maintains the agency's focus on combating poverty and social exclusion. New services have emerged in Crosscare and these include counseling services and awareness raising initiatives. Crosscare collaborates with other community organizations and statutory agencies so that multidisciplinary and multi organizational approaches can be taken to complex issues such as drug abuse and homelessness.

Crosscare's Traveller inclusion Programme established in 1986 with a focus on the issues of accommodation and education. In 2002, an integration project was developed to support local groups and develop Traveller Leadership. Then in 2006, the Traveller Inclusion Programme relocated to offices in the Parish of the Travelling People where it continues its work in collaboration with the Parish and in a closer relationship with Travellers living throughout the diocese.

The National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project will enable Crosscare to develop its work which will involve the active participation of the Traveller Community.



## **Policy Context**

Reach Out: the national suicide prevention strategy was launched in September 2005. It names two main actions relating to Travellers and other marginalized groups:

### **Action15.1**

Determine the risk of engaging in suicidal behaviour associated with belonging to a marginalized group, and reviewing the existing available services and support agencies for marginalized groups

### **Action 15.2.**

Develop services, supports and information / education resources to improve mental health and well being and reduce any increased risk of suicidal behaviour, learning from the earlier review in 15.1, in consultation with members of marginalized groups.

It is with this policy context in mind that this strategic plan is being developed. Some of the critical issues for the project along with strengths and weaknesses are listed in Appendix 1.



### ***Strategic Aim & Objectives - summary***

AIM: To raise awareness on the issue of suicide in the Traveller community and promote the development of initiatives to support suicide prevention intervention and post vention, in a coordinated way.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES	OUTCOMES
<b>Objective One</b> To develop and implement a community development approach to addressing the issue of suicide in the Traveller community through acting as a resource both to Traveller organizations and suicide related services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop and service a Steering Group.</li><li>2. Develop and maintain a relationship with groups and agencies around the country and maintain a contact list.</li><li>3. Develop an evaluation framework for the project</li><li>4. Maintain and develop adequate reporting procedures to support the day to day management and policy direction of the project</li><li>5. Disseminate appropriate information to relevant groups</li></ol>	A Traveller perspective is incorporated and the Traveller organizations are empowered to provide an input into policy development
<b>Objective Two</b> Determine the risk of engaging in suicidal behaviour associated with belonging to a marginalized group, and reviewing the existing available services and support agencies for marginalized groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify and select target groups (young men, recently bereaved...)</li><li>2. Develop a series of focus groups</li><li>3. With Primary Health Coordinators and community development projects do an audit of local services and develop appropriate responses to the identified gaps</li><li>4. Develop appropriate resources to be used with groups</li><li>5. Develop and maintain links with relevant identified national organizations (see appendix 2)</li></ol>	Members of the Traveller community and groups will have contributed to the project
<b>Objective Three</b> Develop services, supports and information / education resources to improve mental health and well being and reduce any increased risk of suicidal behaviour, learning from the earlier review in 15.1, in consultation with members of marginalized groups.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Coordinate a national campaign</li><li>2. Participate in NOSP media campaign</li><li>3. Promote access to ASSIST training for Travellers</li><li>4. Develop Traveller specific training where necessary eg FETAC module for Primary Healthcare Projects, or youth training</li><li>5. Develop culturally appropriate resources or events which will promote access to information</li></ol>	Culturally appropriate and sensitive resources will be available to Travellers and to service providers



## **Appendix 1**

### **Critical Issues and Strategies**

There are a number of strategic issues which will face the project over the next three years. Given that Travellers face many issues within their day to day lives such as poor accommodation, health and discrimination, the project will have to be mindful of these and other issues along the way. The use of a PESTEL analysis has helped to ensure that we are mindful of the important forces and trends which will face the project. The elements of the analysis are Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, Technological, Environmental and legal.

<b>Political factors</b>	<b>Social-Cultural Factors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reach Out- a national strategy for action on suicide prevention 2005 where Travellers are mentioned</li><li>• Partnership approach</li><li>• Regional and National groups such as Irish Traveller Movement, Pavee Point, National Traveller Womens Forum, HSE Suicide Prevention Resource officers</li><li>• Assimilationist policies operating</li><li>• Policy of mainstreaming services</li><li>• Commitment of Government to tackle the issue of Suicide</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of recognition of Traveller ethnic identity</li><li>• Widespread discrimination of the Traveller community</li><li>• Internalisation of barriers to participation by Travellers</li><li>• Lack of understanding of Traveller Culture</li><li>• Stigma attached to Suicide within the community so fear of discussing the topic openly</li><li>• Need for positive role models for target groups ie Traveller youth under 18 boys and girls and Traveller men under 35</li><li>• Need for an interagency approach particularly for groups who are hard to reach within the community such as those who are homeless in prison etc</li></ul>



<b>Economic Factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secured funding for National Traveller Suicide Prevention Worker in Crosscare for the next 3 years</li><li>• Possibility of recruiting Travellers as sessional workers</li></ul>	<b>Technological Factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of holistic and creative media to deliver messages</li><li>• Local radio and media</li><li>• Multi media</li><li>• Some target groups have low literacy levels</li><li>• Internet developments of online services</li><li>• Wireless and mobile technology</li></ul>
<b>Environmental factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need for improvements to Travellers access to Accommodation, Health education</li><li>• The geographical spread of Traveller families around the country and as such groups working with Travellers</li><li>• Promoting local responses from local groups</li></ul>	<b>Legal factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equality legislation</li><li>• Traveller accommodation plans</li><li>• Trespass legislation</li><li>• Development of a Coordinated responses</li></ul>



## SWOT Analysis

The project has many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats which will help to direct the project over the next three years. They include

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commitment for three years funding</li><li>• Well trained staff</li><li>• Travellers have been involved from beginning</li><li>• Administration and technical supports available</li><li>• Positive response to project from groups already</li><li>• Opportunities to network with Crosscare</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One member of staff with a national remit</li><li>• Limited to 3 years</li><li>• Some areas of country feel they have been neglected and resources concentrated in Dublin</li><li>• High expectations which may lead to frustrations and disappointments</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunity to develop partnership approach and develop models of good practice</li><li>• Supporting local initiatives</li><li>• Build on further Traveller involvement</li><li>• Develop culturally appropriate resources</li><li>• Work with existing service providers to improve delivery of services and training for Travellers</li><li>• Support ASSIST training</li><li>• Primary Health Care Programmes in existence are models of good practice need to work with them to ensure information reaches target group in most appropriate way.</li></ul>	<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To ensure Travellers are included at all levels of the project</li><li>• The project because of national remit could become diluted</li><li>• Buy in from Traveller groups and organizations needed if project is to succeed</li><li>• Stigma attached to the issue reluctance to openly talk about the issue will be challenge .</li><li>• Community development approach need to involve Travellers at all stages of the project</li><li>• Always difficult to engage Traveller men suicide an issue which is having a devastating effect on young Traveller men so ensuring Traveller men are targeted and engaged with will be a challenge</li><li>• There is much political will at the moment to tackle the issue of suicide. The challenge for this project is to ensure that Travellers are not left behind and have access to services in a culturally appropriate way</li></ul>





## ***Appendix2***

### **National organizations which have been engaged with already**

- National Office for Suicide Prevention
- Crosscare
- Pavee Point
- Parish of the Travelling People
- Irish Traveller Movement
- National Traveller Womens Forum
- Primary Health Care Programmes
- Traveller Community Development Projects
- Samaritans
- Console
- Suicide Resource Officers

There will be during the life of the project, differing types and levels of engagement and this list will be expanded on

It is hoped that this plan will be a coordinated approach that will be inclusive of the voice and experience of the Traveller community by working in tandem with other agencies to be a resource to and catalyst for Traveller inclusion within the current Suicide Prevention Strategy rather than the development of separate Traveller services.