



Newsletter of National Traveller MABS

Issue 16, Summer 2019

Welcome

Welcome to Issue 16 of *The National Traveller MABS Newsletter*, our bi-annual newsletter of National Traveller MABS.

We hope you find the articles interesting and informative. We explain some of the services that are available for Travellers to access, and also keep you up to date with developments of the work of National Traveller MABS.

There is an article which gives details on help available to people facing gambling issues. We take a look at financial abuse and the services available to people who experience it. We look at life insurance and some of the benefits. There is an article on how being a member of a credit union can greatly benefit you, and help you save money.

In June we are going to launch research into the extent of energy poverty experienced by Travellers living in caravans and mobile homes. It was carried out by Dr. Stuart Stamp, National Traveller MABS Worker Michelle Kearns, Ballyfermot MABS and multiple Traveller organisations. We will also be launching a new flyer developed in conjunction with two Primary Health Care Projects in West Limerick and Clondalkin. The two organisations have been working in consultation with us since last November to develop the flyer and a library of images to use in our future work and publications. We are currently developing a flyer for Traveller families with a family member in prison to assist them accessing services.

We are in the process of advertising for a new position in National Traveller MABS. The post is for a Project Worker who will continue to work on developing policy on the issue of culturally appropriate accommodation. The ideal candidate would have a human rights approach and be aware of the issues faced by Travellers.

In addition to all of the above, we cover the work of our colleagues including: St. Catherine's Primary Health Care's Cultural Awareness Training in Carlow; ENAR Ireland's Anti-Racist election protocol which has been supported by various political parties; the launch of the Community Platform's values manifesto ahead of the local and European elections; and representation to the meeting of the Joint Committee of Education and Skills by national Traveller organisations.

Finally we would like to thank Travellers and their organisations who work with National Traveller MABS, helping to push for positive changes for Travellers.

Please visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/NTMABS/> or follow us on Twitter at @ntmabs.



Dermot Sreenan



Nancy Power

New address service from An Post

an post

Did you know that An Post has recently developed a new service for people who are homeless? It's called Address Point. It is a service that gives someone a fixed address to receive regular post and access essential services for themselves and their families. This will allow you to:

- Apply for jobs
- Access services and facilities
- Pick up your post at a time that suits you

To get an Address Point you must go to the An Post website, anpost.com/addresspoint.

- Then you must select the post office nearest to you from the designated post office list
- Take note of your new address

This service is suitable for letters up to A4 size and 100g in weight. You will need to present Photo ID (for example a Public Services Card or Driver's Licence) at your selected post office to collect your post. You must collect your post in person. Your post will be held for up to 20 days. If it is not collected within this time then it will be returned to the sender. If your circumstances change and you need a new Address Point address, simply log on to anpost.com/addresspoint and choose a new post office collection point. It's as simple as that. Remember to check your original address for mail – for security reasons, letters cannot be forwarded from one Address Point (post office) to another. Be sure to always use your Address Point address in full and exactly as it is provided, so that your mail reaches your chosen post office safely. An Post does not retain any personal data on the webpage www.anpost.com/addresspoint. An Address Point address will not suffice as a "proof of address" document when such verification is required.



National Traveller Mental Health Network Launch



The issue of mental health amongst the Irish Traveller community is a major one. According to the 2017 Community Foundation for Ireland / Behaviour and Attitudes survey of Irish Travellers, over 90% of Travellers agree that mental health problems are common in the community.

The National Traveller Mental Network is a collective of Travellers and Traveller organisations country-wide. It was established in 2018. It held a very successful launch in NUI Galway on the 15th of March 2019. The launch was extremely well attended with Travellers and Traveller groups as well as service providers from across the country. The Network's strategic plan was launched at the event. The day saw a wonderful display of culture and art provided by Galway Traveller Movement. There were presentations from Travellers and Traveller youths from across the country about their own experience of mental health. The event received excellent coverage from RTE.

The aim of the National Traveller Mental Health Network is to develop a collective space that is community-led, where local, regional and national Traveller mental health issues are highlighted, discussed and addressed. It is a space where solutions are explored with a view to being included in culturally appropriate policy on Traveller mental health.

The objectives of the network include:

- To develop a collective space where the voices of Travellers throughout the country are heard
- To ensure that the network is community-led
- To ensure that the social determinants of mental health are highlighted and included
- To explore ways and means to address this
- To lobby and advocate on behalf of Traveller mental health
- To develop and input into policy
- To share information and best practice
- To gain recognition as the National Traveller Mental Health Network and to be consulted as such by policy makers

For more information about the network and its strategic plan please contact Suzie McCarthy on 0851253211
Email n.travmhnetwork@gmail.com

Minceirs Whiden

Minceirs Whiden (Cant for Travellers talking) Ireland's only all Traveller forum was established in 2004 with the aims of creating a safe place where Travellers could come together and discuss the issues affecting our community, where Travellers could build a collective strategy to address these issues.

The key objectives of Minceirs Whiden are:

- To promote an understanding of Traveller history, culture and ethnic identity.
- To unite Travellers and promote a collective Traveller voice and a political platform for the Traveller community.
- To work in solidarity with other nomadic and excluded groups nationally and internationally. To work in the spirit of co-operation and solidarity with other Traveller groups and organisations to bring about better outcomes for the Traveller community.

Challenges facing the Traveller Community: Decades of societal tolerance of anti-Traveller bias and racism, negative stereotyping and discrimination has resulted in the Traveller

community experiencing extreme inequality in life expectancy, health, accommodation, education & employment.

Our community is in crisis where many see no future. This is evident in the high levels of depression, addiction and suicides that has crept into our community in recent decades and that is having such a devastating impact on our families and community, so too in the feuding that exist within our community. These are symptoms of oppression that can be seen mirrored in marginalised and disadvantaged communities around the world.

Traveller groups, organisations and activists, and the many people who support our community have done their best to highlight injustice inequalities the Traveller community experience and have campaigned for better outcomes. Sadly, because anti-Traveller bias and racism is so deeply embedded within Irish society this has been a long painful struggle.



It is important we don't give up hope. Irish Travellers are a strong proud people. Despite unbelievable odds and adversity, inequality and injustices we have held on to our Traveller identity while still contributing so much to Irish society. By working together and using all the tools available to us we can and will come through these current challenges.

Irish Traveller political participation is one of these tools: To make real change happen we need to get the Traveller voice heard within the political arena where policy decisions that directly impact the Traveller community are made and implemented.

Every person in the country that has the right to vote and should vote – this is our say in choosing who governs us. These are the people making decisions that affect us, it is important we elect people who represent us, people that understand our needs and champions of our cause, that works toward equality and justice for all.

At its heart the key role of Government is to manage the resources of the country and make decisions that are in the best interest of the country and all its people. For too long addressing and resolving the needs of our community has not been on the agenda in any meaningful way. It's time for that to change!

Over the past number of years much of Minceirs Whiden's work has on focused highlighting the importance of political participation for the Traveller Community. As a community turning our back on the political system and choosing not to vote is not doing us any good, we need to change tack here and start using our votes to influence change.

There is no community in Ireland that has been so deeply and negatively impacted by political decisions or political inactions as our community examples:

- **1963 Itinerancy Report,**
- **Anti-Trespass Law,**
- **The failures to implement Local Traveller Accommodation** plan even though our government recognised Traveller accommodation was in crisis in 1998, 20 years later that crisis is worse, while local authorities fail

to deliver on their Traveller Accommodation Plans & Budgets go unused.

Historical Event - In Feb 2019 Minceirs Whiden held the first ever Traveller Political Participation Conference in Ireland. At the conference 3 members of the Traveller community launched their 2019 Local Elections candidacy.

There are now 5 Travellers contesting 2019 Local Elections we hope to see more Traveller contesting elections in the future.

- Martin Ward, Tuam
- Julie O'Reilly, Longford
- Catherine Coffey O'Brien, Cork
- TJ Hogan a young Traveller man is also running as an election candidate in Cork City
- Ann Marie Roche, Loughrea, Co Galway

Minceirs Whiden also launched "**Mobilising Irish Travellers Political Participation Before, During and After Elections**" Handbook. Please contact Minceirs Whiden (address below) for copy of the handbook.

The Irish Local Elections are taking place on 24th May 2019 - Use your Vote to get the Traveller voice heard. Every Vote Counts.

Every Traveller Vote Counts.

It important we don't give up hope, Irish Travellers are a strong proud people, despite unbelievable odds and adversity, inequality and injustices we held on to our Traveller identity while still contributing so much to Irish society. By working together we can and will come through these current challenges.

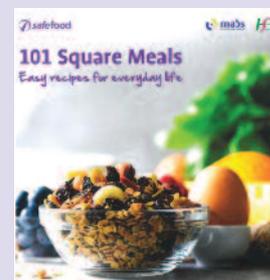
**For further information on Minceirs Whiden please contact us email: office.minceirswhiden@gmail.com
Postal Address: Minceirs Whiden, floor 2 Our Lady of Lourdes Community Centre, Childers Road, Limerick
Tel 085 8804450**

This article was submitted by Minceirs Whiden

101 Square Meals, Easy Recipes for Everyday Life

Safefood, MABS and the HSE have produced an excellent cook book that helps you make healthy food on a budget. The cook book, called '101 Square Meals' has recently been updated and has a range of budget friendly, easy to follow recipes for breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as snacks and light meals. The recipes also tell you how many people each recipe will feed, what utensils you will need and the cooking and preparation times.

For more information you can email us at info@ntmabs.org or go online to get a downloadable version at [https://www.safefood.eu/recipes/101-Square-Meals-\(PDF\).aspx](https://www.safefood.eu/recipes/101-Square-Meals-(PDF).aspx)





National Traveller Organisations make representations to the meeting of the Joint Committee of Education and Skills

In March 2019, representatives from National Traveller organisations attended a meeting of the Joint Committee on Education and Skills. The Irish Traveller Movement, the National Traveller Women's Forum and Pavee Point were amongst those who addressed the meeting. Organisations were keen to give the committee key facts on Travellers in education as well as recommendations to improve educational participation and attainment for Travellers.

The Irish Traveller Movement made the following points:

- There is an absence of positive visibility of Traveller culture in the curricula and in the whole school environment.
- Bullying and racism is experienced by Traveller learners from their settled peers and also from educators.
- Discriminatory practises are still evident. For example, enrolment processes which exclude Traveller children and growing numbers of Traveller children being placed on shortened/reduced time tables inappropriately, which significantly impacts on their educational opportunities and outcomes.
- There are generally low expectations of Traveller learners.
- The rate of transfer from primary to second level is less than 100%.
- Many Traveller children complete eight years of primary school with poor attainment levels compared to their settled peers. Some Traveller children leave primary school unable to read.
- Only 13% of Travellers complete secondary education in comparison with 92% of the general population.
- Less than 1% of Travellers are in third level education, with only 167 adult Travellers with a third level qualification.

Recommendations by the National Traveller Women's Forum included:

- Obligatory anti-racism and intercultural training is required for all teachers as part of pre-service and in-service teacher training along with visibility of Traveller culture in the curricula.
- Appropriate desegregated data collection needs to be prioritised within the education system. The analysis

from this data collection is needed to ensure targets and actions are having an impact for Traveller women and girls in education and to put in place the necessary appropriate targeted initiatives.

- We need adequate resources to ensure increased retention and attainment levels. This is to make available more practical supports available including: school uniforms, books and lunches where necessary; and also subsidised school/community-based supports for homework and afterschool clubs.

Pavee Point recommended:

- All education personnel, including policy makers, need to be visibly informed by interculturalism and anti-racism, including an explicit focus on Travellers.
- The amendment to the Education Act currently going through the Dáil which proposes that Traveller culture and history will be reflected in the school curriculum will require concrete programmes and materials for schools, on Travellers' history and culture.
- Now that we're post-recession we'd like to see the restoration of support services for Travellers attending schools - services that were savagely cut by 85% during austerity. Direct and targeted resources are needed to promote Traveller inclusion in mainstream education. One size does not fit all.
- Another important action in National Traveller Roma and Inclusion Strategy is to promote affirmative action to support Travellers to become teachers. This is essential in promoting positive role models as well as influencing the culture and ethos of schools.
- Direct engagement with Traveller organisations as equal and key partners in engagement with the education system at all levels is essential.



Ian Mc Donagh, student from Galway addressed the committee:

My name is Ian McDonagh. I am 17 years old and I attend Merlin College, Doughiska. It is my honour to be here today to speak about my views of the education system as a young Traveller in leaving cert I would like to take this opportunity to say that Merlin College is a great school, with a fantastic atmosphere where there is a genuine respect between students and teachers. I have a lot of encouragement and help from my teachers and also from my Scholar's Den Homework Club where I attend on a daily basis. In January 2016, I became the first Traveller to ever take part and to win an award at the BT Young Scientists Exhibition, winning 2nd prize in 2016 in the Biological & Ecological Category. My project looked at "Does the lunar cycle play a role in equine birth patterns?" In January 2017, I won an award at the BT Young Scientists Exhibition, winning the Jack Restan award this is a special award in the BT Young Scientists. My project looked at the "Cures and Folklore of the Irish Traveller Community". Over the last number of years I have been campaigning more speed ramps and play facilities in my local area in Galway city. This really did give me great interest into the world of politics and I am hoping in the coming years that I will be a member of this government and be able to give the people the voice that they need. I am proud to be a Traveller and I hope that being recognised as an ethnic minority will enable other young and old Travellers to feel proud of their identity. I am hoping after being recognised as ethnic minority that our Traveller culture, language and history will be taught in schools and will bring about

positive changes for the future. The yellow flag has been a great part of our school not just for the Travelling Community but for all communities. As you may be all aware of these census

- *13% of Traveller children complete second – level education compared to 92% in the general population.*
- *Of those Travellers who drop out of second level education, 55% have left by the age of 15*
- *The number of Traveller children who progress to third level education represents just 1% of the Traveller community.*
- *The majority of Travellers 70% have only primary or lower levels of education. My own hopes and dreams for the future is to join An Garda Siochana. Well, as a young Traveller I feel they paint a very bad picture with Travellers being or less on the margin of society. I think that the future for young Travellers is totally dependent on their increased participation in education and the workforce and that this must be seen as a priority. For me education is very important as it builds self-confidence and awareness and an ability to participate actively in our society. Low levels of education lead to poor self-esteem, poor job opportunities, and poor health and can also lead to depression. In Conclusion I think that parents need to encourage their children to gain at least a Leaving Cert and that School Principals and the Department of Education should take active measures together with Traveller parents to increase Traveller participation at both 2nd and 3rd level.*

Project Worker – Affordable Accommodation

National Traveller MABS has consistently found that accommodation is expensive for many Travellers. Through our work in financial inclusion, we have supported people towards securing loans for caravans and mobile homes in order to address accommodation needs. We have continued this work by undertaking two pieces of research into the costs of mobile homes, and energy poverty in mobile homes.

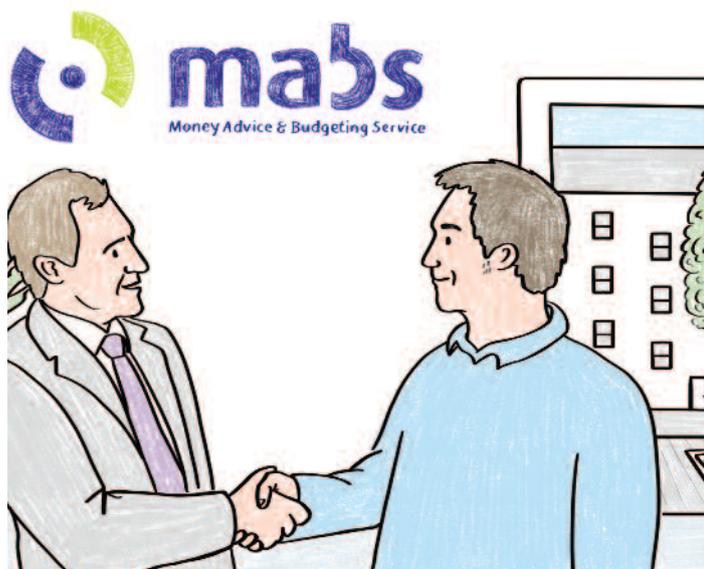
We are now looking to recruit a project worker for one year to develop a policy framework in relation to advancing

affordable, cultural appropriate accommodation for Travellers. This framework will have a particular focus on caravans / mobile homes for long-term living. We are looking for a candidate with research and policy development experience. The issue of affordable accommodation needs a policy solution, and we believe that National Traveller MABS can contribute towards this.

Recruitment will commence in June for this post.

Developing culturally appropriate images for our materials

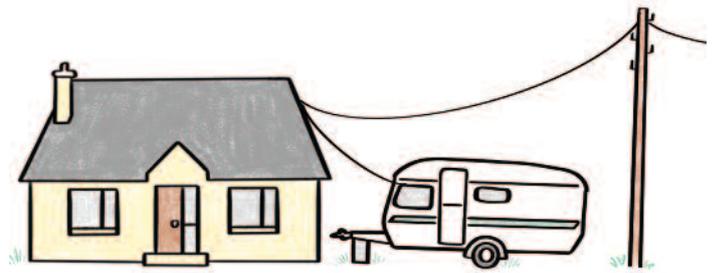
Through our community education work we have found that some Travellers do not know that services – including MABS – are for them. Two common reasons for this are Travellers do not see themselves represented in promotional materials, and language can exclude or confuse people. Since 2018, National Traveller MABS have been trying to make our materials and publications easier to understand.



We hope that using clear language and images will make our materials accessible to a larger audience. To achieve this, we have been working with a Traveller focus group and Cork-based artist Hazel Hurley to develop suitable images.

The design process

The focus group is made up of workers from Primary Health Care Projects in Clondalkin, Dublin and Newcastle West, Limerick. Both organisations participated in money management community education programmes with MABS in 2018. The group discussed the types of financial issues Travellers experience, and explored how National Traveller MABS could use images to communicate these issues. They described what the images should look like to Hazel, who



drew up sketches. It was a time-consuming process, and the group put a lot of energy into it.

We have now developed a library of almost fifty images. We also have developed a check-list of what images should look, in case we need to develop more images in future. National Traveller MABS are delighted that we can now use these images in our newsletters, reports, flyers, education resources, and other promotional materials. We are grateful to the focus group for the time they took out from their own work and effort they put into the process.

New flyer

The focus group also worked together to develop a leaflet promoting MABS, which will use the new images. It is an easy-to-read guide to MABS which will explain how to make contact with your local service. The flyer will be distributed to MABS offices and Traveller organisations around the country.





Traveller Pride launches

National Traveller MABS are excited to announce two upcoming launches for our new MABS flyer, which we have developed with workers from Primary Health Care Projects in Newcastle West, Limerick and Clondalkin, Dublin. The events will take place in Limerick and Clondalkin as part of Traveller Pride. The dates for the launch events are:

Limerick City Hall, June 6th:

This launch will take place as part of a public event for Traveller Pride Week in Limerick in City Hall, involving West Limerick Primary Health Care Project and Clondalkin Travellers Development Group.

Clondalkin Travellers Development Group, June 13th:

This launch will be part of Clondalkin Travellers' Pride event, which will focus on mental health.

Look out for more information on both of these events or contact Sian at sian_crowley@mabs.ie

Traveller Pride Week: Making connections across Limerick

Public event celebrating achievements from working together

Conversations with people from Minceir Whiden, Limerick City Traveller Health Advocacy Programme, Kilmallock Travellers Group and West Limerick Primary Health Care Project for Travellers with Clondalkin Primary Health Care Project

Where: Istabraq Hall, Limerick City and County Council Corporate Headquarters, Merchant's Quay, Limerick

Day: Thursday 6th June 2019

Time: 11.15am-1pm

Information: Call 061 557372 or go to Limerick.ie

Community, Decency, and Participation – important values for politics today

Values are powerful tools in creating social change. They are at the heart of every action, practice and decision of an organisation. On May 2nd the Community Platform launched two manifestos ahead of the local and European elections. The manifestos called on local and European candidates to put people first and uphold the values of **Community**, **Decency**, and **Participation** in their political work.

The manifestos are tools to promote a positive and inclusive value system in politics – to celebrate what we collectively stand for, not what we stand against. They can be used as conversation-starters with local and European candidates. At the launch, MEP Marian Harkin said that politicians need to be challenged on how to turn words into action, and that real participation is a real challenge for most politicians.

Electing people who will deliver on these values on the 24th May will help achieve the type of inclusive society we all want to live in at a local level or as part of a wider European Union.

To download the manifestoes and other campaign material visit <http://communityplatform.ie/>

Follow the hashtag #MyValuesMyVote on Twitter



Left to right: Dr Mary Murphy, Maynooth University, Paul Ginnell, European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland, Marian Harkin MEP, and Damian Walsh, Community Platform, at the launch of the Community Platform's Values Manifestos



Information resource for organisations working with families of Travellers in prison

National Traveller MABS is a member of the Travellers in Prison Initiative and has worked with TPI members to develop a resource for organisations working with families of Travellers in prison. The resource is a guide to assist families in accessing their welfare and tax entitlements. It also describes the budgeting and debt advice supports

available from MABS offices. The appendix to the guide gives contact details for all MABS and Citizens Information Services across the country. The guide will be launched in autumn 2019 and is available on the website of National Traveller MABS: <https://www.ntmabs.org/>

What is financial abuse?

You might have heard the term 'financial abuse' before and wondered what it means. In this short article we give a brief overview of what it involves. Financial abuse is often a hidden form of abuse. It involves a person controlling the finances of another person without their permission.

Financial abuse can take place in lots of different types of relationships. In some cases, it can be subtle or even unintentional. In other cases the abuse is intentional and an act of control. The two most common forms of financial abuse are: abuse of vulnerable elderly people, or abuse within domestic relationships.

The HSE defines financial abuse as: 'theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits' (HSE 2011:3).

The following are examples of types of financial abuse:

- When a person who struggles to manage money is offered 'help' by a family member or friend, who then treats their money as if it were their own.
- When a person comes into a large sum of money, through inheritance or winning a prize, and friends of family attempt to persuade the person to hand over their money.
- Financial abuse in a romantic or domestic relationship can involve: with-holding money or credit cards, with-holding basic necessities, for example food and clothing, and refusing to allow the victim to work or access education. This is considered as a form of domestic abuse.
- When a person is forced to hand over their social welfare to fund other items, including addiction or illegal

debt. In this way the welfare does benefit the person it was intended for.

Today many adult children live with their parents and cannot afford to make a financial contribution to the household. This is not financial abuse. However it is important that adults who can afford to make a contribution to the household do so, so that the household can meet the day-to-day costs of running the home, groceries, and heating.

Every person has the right to live free from abuse, and has the right to make their own financial decisions to access adequate housing, food, light and heat. No one should be forced to make compromises that affect their well-being and dignity and that of their children.

If you are concerned about yourself or someone you know you can contact the following services:

MABS Helpline

0761 07 2000, Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Request a call back helpline@mabs.ie

Women's Aid

Tel: 1800 341 900
www.womensaid.ie
Email: helpline@womensaid.ie

Safeguarding Ireland

If you are concerned about the abuse of an elderly or vulnerable adult, you can find out your local support service here:
<https://www.safeguardingireland.org/contact/>



Have you thought about getting life insurance?

What is life insurance?

Life insurance is a type of insurance policy that provides for your family if you pass away. The cost of a policy will depend on the type of protection you are seeking, your age, health and lifestyle. People take out life assurance so that any expenses that arise after they die are covered. This might include funeral costs and costs for maintenance of a grave or just leaving a cash sum to support the family when their loved one has passed. It is important to check before you take out a policy what is covered as some policies will not cover certain kinds of deaths, including deaths due to a drugs overdose or due to deaths due to risky behaviour.

What policy is right for me?

When you are choosing a policy, there are a number of options including whole life cover, which is cover for the whole of life. This covers you if you become ill when you get older. These policies are more expensive. There are other plans such as over 50's plans, couples plans and term cover. It is important to get independent advice to choose the policy for

you. There is also a lot of information online and on comparison websites that will give you a quote for life insurance based on your age, health and the amount of cover you require.

Credit Unions' 'Death Benefit Insurance'

Death Benefit Insurance is a unique service offered by **some** credit unions to help pay for end of life expenses. It pays a fixed lump sum in the event of death and where death is as a result of an accident, the lump sum can be doubled. There are some terms and conditions to meet and you should ask your credit union about these and the amount of Death Benefit Insurance lump sum currently payable. You should also check with your credit union how the premium is paid.

To get a quote go to www.bonkers.ie/compare-life-insurance and complete the form. You will be asked for your date of birth, how many years you would like the policy to cover, how much cover you want, for example €100,000 and whether or not you are a smoker.

Discontinuation of the Household Budget Scheme for MABS Clients Nationwide

Over the last 10 years, in order to provide alternatives to the illegal moneylender for members of the Traveller community, National Traveller MABS operated the Lough Payment Scheme. The option to operate this scheme is now closed to all MABS services.

As from the 10th of May 2019 MABS offices will no longer offer the Lough Household Budget Scheme. The scheme allowed clients to have an amount stopped from their social welfare payment to pay bills and loans or to save. This scheme was important for clients in that it showed creditors and lenders the client making regular payments and so helped with their credit record.

The facility was offered to MABS clients who needed support and were seen to be financially excluded or vulnerable. For example, they may have health difficulties or they may be on such a low income that they struggle to hold on to money long enough to pay bills.

The closure of the Lough Payment Scheme may encourage clients to become more financially independent. However, National Traveller MABS is aware that clients will need support with this. MABS clients who had availed of the Lough Payment Scheme are now responsible for ensuring that their loans are paid weekly, either over the counter at their credit union or by direct debit. Clients who use the Household Budget Scheme are urged to explore alternative arrangements such as:

- MABS Special Accounts (Clients need to visit local MABS in their area)
- Credit Union (Clients can make payments over the counter in the credit union)
- Bank (If the client has a bank account they can set up a standing order/direct/debit)

Clients should contact National Traveller MABS on 0761072230 or their local MABS if they require further support or advice in the above.

Cultural Awareness Training with Carlow Community Traveller Health Workers

In April our education worker Sian attended a Cultural Awareness Training Workshop run by Traveller Primary Health Care workers in St. Catherine's Community Services Centre in Carlow. The training was very well facilitated by the staff Winnie Cassidy, Michelle Maddock Doran, Kathleen Kerrigan, and Edel Keogh. It explored themes including stereotyping, myths and prejudices, and how our opinions can be influenced by the media. We discussed some facts about life for Travellers in Ireland. For example, the infant mortality rate amongst Travellers is 3.6 times higher than the general population, while the life expectancy for Traveller men is approximately 15 years below the average for the general male population. The facilitators explained how many Travellers live in poor, overcrowded conditions and are exposed to a variety of health and safety risks. They also described to participants what it is like to live with discrimination every day – to be refused from restaurants, bars, and shops just for being a Traveller.

The event was well-attended by staff from a variety of organisations including the local MABS service, community

police, mid-wives, HSE, language therapists and a person working with asylum seekers. It was great to see organisations working towards developing trust and understanding. We had a discussion about what kinds of barriers Travellers experience when trying to access services and explored ways of overcoming these. A recurrent theme was the importance of building trust between a service and the community.

We were delighted to see Matt Mulvey, coordinator of Carlow MABS in attendance. Matt will be facilitating a money management community education course with St. Catherine's later this year. He will be using *A Way of Life* and *Overcoming Illegal Debt*, two resources which have been developed specifically for working with Travellers. If you would like to find out more about these resources or are interested in facilitating this course with a local Traveller organisation, please get in touch with Sian in National Traveller MABS at sian_crowley@mabs.ie



Participants and facilitators at the Cultural Awareness Training Workshop run by Traveller Primary Health Care staff in St. Catherine's Community Services Centre in Carlow, 9th April 2019

Main political parties sign up to Anti-Racism Electoral Protocol



ENAR Ireland launched their Anti-Racism Election Protocol 2019 on March 21st – the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The protocol was launched by Senator Colette Kelleher in Leinster House. Political parties and independent candidates are being asked to sign up to a pledge, ahead of the local elections on May 24th.

When political parties sign up to the protocol they pledge to:

- reject racism and all forms of discrimination and hate speech
- condemn campaign materials that incite hatred on the grounds of race
- debate political issues in a responsible and respectful way
- avoid stereotyping, prejudice and confusion
- reflect diversity in campaign materials

ENAR write that “The Anti-Racism Election Protocol has played an important role since 2001 in ensuring that

elections have been conducted in such a way that they do not incite hatred or prejudice on the grounds of ‘race’, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religious belief and membership of the Traveller Community.”

The following parties have endorsed the protocol: Aontú, Éirígí, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, Green Party, Independents for Change, Labour Party, People Before Profit, Solidarity, Social Democrats, Sinn Féin, The Workers’ Party,

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) Ireland is still inviting political representatives to demonstrate and renew their commitment to anti-racism by signing this updated declaration as an indication of their support and endorsement of the Protocol.



Pay as you go Emergency Credit is increasing from €5 to €10

In January of this year pay as you go credit for electricity meters increased from €5 to €10. This means that if you have a contract with a utility company and they have installed a card meter you will be offered €10 emergency credit to give you time to purchase more credit. If you use up all €10 you will need to top up by at least €15 to use the emergency credit again. This follows as a similar change in gas last year.

However if you have a meter installed by the local authority this change does not apply to you as this only relates to meters provided by utility companies (direct suppliers like Electric Ireland, SSE Airtricity, Bord Gais).



Online gaming and gambling

In our last newsletter we looked at gambling addiction. In this newsletter we take a look at online gaming and its links to gambling.

Gambling Addiction

In 2018, gaming addiction was classified as a mental health condition by the World Health Organisation. Many people can play video games or online games every day, and can turn off the game and go about their daily life. However just like with gambling, some people develop problematic gaming behaviours. Gaming addiction is the obsessive drive to play computer games that disrupts a person's everyday life. It stimulates pleasure centres in the brain in the same way as alcohol, drugs, and gambling. Video games are designed to be addictive. The player feels a sense of triumph for wins which entice players to beat high scores. Symptoms of gaming addiction can include: tiredness due to long periods of gaming instead of sleeping; headaches; irritability when unable to play; obsession with thoughts about playing; isolation self from family and friends in order to play games.

Online gaming and its links to youth gambling

Not all video games involve gambling. Some online and video games offer betting systems that lead to gambling in young people. These include 'loot boxes' where players can pay real money to win new items for their characters, and third-party sites allow players to bet against each other. Young adults are at the highest risk of developing gambling addictions, in particular young adult men, who are under a lot of pressure in their daily life, who have a high level dependence on alcohol.

Symptoms of youth gambling

In 2010, adolescent gambling in Ireland was estimated to be 2-3 times higher than adult gambling (Institute of Public Health). Symptoms of gambling in young people include:

- Not going to school, or pretending to go to school but actually going to play games
- Preoccupation with gambling or video arcades
- Money going missing without a reason
- Having large amounts of money without a reason
- Borrowing or stealing from friends of family
- Depression and/ or irritability

If you are concerned about a young a person's gaming behaviour, it is important to set boundaries around their use of screens and internet platforms, and it is important to maintain these boundaries.

Gamblers Anonymous

Find out more about gambling addiction and to find out about support meetings
<https://www.gamblersanonymous.ie/>

Regional phone numbers

Dublin: 01 872 1133
Cork: 087 285 9552
Galway: 086 349 4450
Tipperary: 085 783 1045
Kerry: 087 426 6633
Waterford: 087 185 0294
Belfast: 048 9024 9185

Rutland Addiction Centre

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