

Annual Report 2024

LONDON
GYPSIES &
TRAVELLERS

Challenging perceptions, changing lives



2024

Funders

BBC Children in Need

Garfield Weston Foundation

Greater London Authority –
Propel New Deal for Young
People Fund

Henry Smith Charity

Irish Government Emigrant
Support Programme

Joseph Rowntree
Charitable Trust

Lloyds Bank Foundation

London Borough of
Hackney

London Borough of
Islington

London Community
Foundation

Moving for Change

National Lottery

Community Fund,

(Civil Society Roots fund)

Oak Foundation

Trust for London



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme

An Boinn Gaelthail Eanáiracha
Department of Foreign Affairs



Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION



MOVING FOR
CHANGE

SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON



A message from the Chair

As I reflect on the past year, I feel incredibly proud of the progress we've made both as an organisation and as a community. It's been a year focused on growth, empowerment and strengthening the core foundations of our organisation.

We led an internal resilience project focused on sustainability and ensuring we are further prepared and equipped to work towards our goals. We've built a foundation that allows us to seize new opportunities while ensuring we remain grounded and focused on our mission.

Our communities have faced their share of challenges this year – I'm truly inspired by the strength and energy coming from within. There is a renewed sense of purpose, and I feel a real shift. Our community is stepping up in ways we've never seen before. We're no longer waiting for change to happen: we are the ones making it happen. The growing confidence and energy within the community is a sign that we are on the right path.



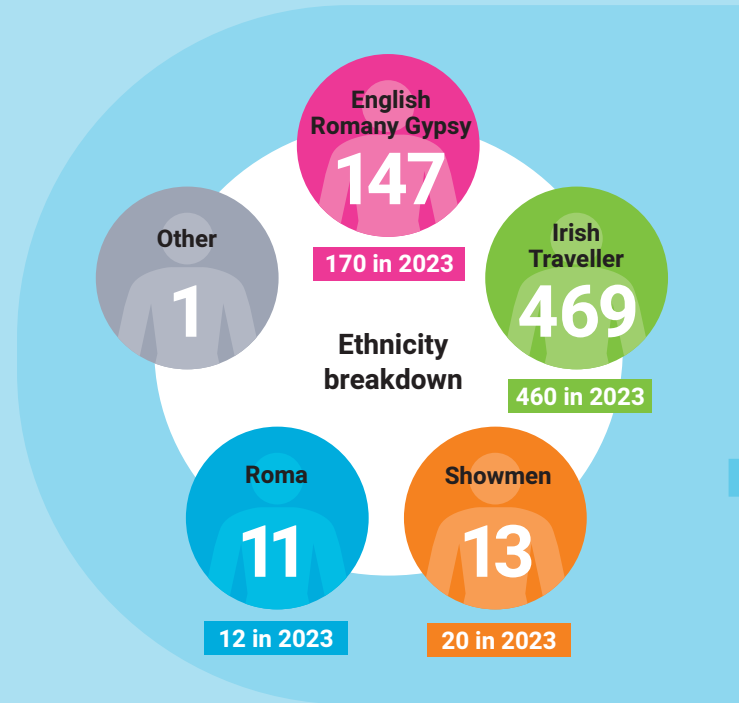
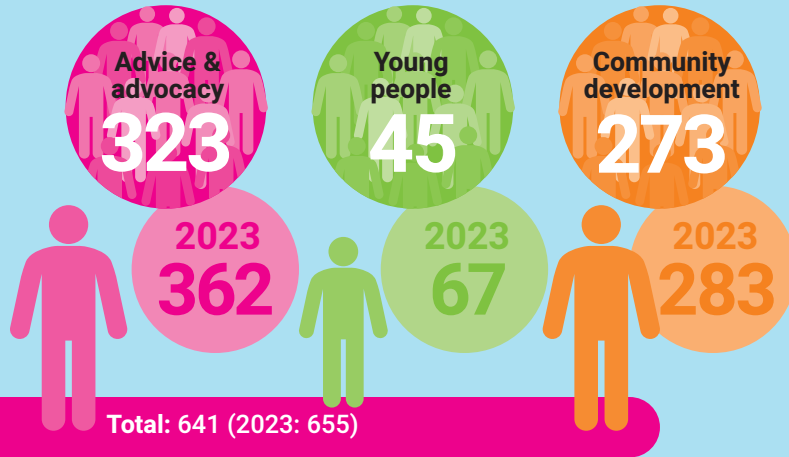
At LGT, we've made significant strides in ensuring that community members are part of our decision-making. We've seen more community members stepping into key roles on the Board of Trustees and bringing their voices and expertise to help shape our future. This is progress we can all be proud of, and it's a clear reflection of the work we've done to empower our community. I encourage everyone to continue seeking out these opportunities and to step into the roles that will help us continue to grow and thrive.

Finally, I want to take a moment to thank our incredible team: your hard work, dedication, and unwavering commitment to our mission make everything we do possible. I'm deeply grateful for your continued support in carrying out the vital work that makes such a difference in our community. Together, we are building a future where our community is stronger, more resilient and fully equipped to succeed. I'm excited for all we will accomplish in the year ahead.

Helena Kiely-Savin

People we have worked with this year

Overall, LGT worked to support 641 families in 31 London boroughs, and 43 out of London.



"Thank you for your support. It means so much. I do hope I can stay involved with your organisation ... when I am in a position to support others I would like to do so."

Families supported by borough

Note: the borough breakdown does not add up to the total number of people. This is because there is a lot of movement between boroughs and so one family will appear twice.



754

Securing our future

Alongside its public-facing work, LGT has this year also focused on its own future and run an organisational resilience project. We have reflected on the challenges that we face, and that may arise in the future, so that we can build strong and resilient foundations, allowing LGT to continue to thrive for years to come.

This resilience work has covered the core parts of how the organisation functions – reviewing our staff roles and structure, upgrading the internal systems and processes which support our work, examining how we communicate externally and how we generate income.

We have reviewed all of our work areas to ensure that we are responding to the needs of the community and making the most of opportunities to influence policy and decision makers on the issues that matter. We have looked at how we communicate with our key stakeholders effectively and how we can run the core “backroom” functions of the organisation as effectively as possible.



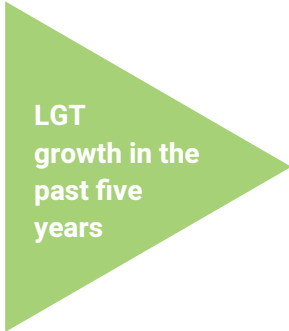
“Our away days this year have been an important time to step back from the daily demands of our work and reflect together on our shared values and vision, and how they form the foundation of how we work together as a team.”

Debbly Kennett

This has helped us in the process of hiring new staff members to fill the gaps left by departing team members. At the same time, we are evolving the way we run our accommodation advice service and manage our policy and community development work. We've also increased our capacity to handle the ever-growing amount of central administration and finance management that grows as the organisation does.

There has been much reflection and development for the LGT team as we sow the seeds for a sustainable future, with several "away days" helping the whole team explore ways of doing things differently in the fields of external communications and community development work. We have also reflected on our organisational values which capture why and how we work:

- Collaborative
- Courage
- Empowerment
- Equity
- Inclusive
- Rooted in the community



	People supported	Boroughs where active	People supported outside London
2019	229	22	9
2020	303	25	10
2021	379	21	16
2022	554	29	44
2023	665	31	47
2024	641	31	43

Mentoring and employability programme takes off



This year saw LGT's Bright Futures initiative transition into a mentoring and employability support programme, tailored to the needs of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller youth aged 16 to 25. Each young person enrolled on the programme (mentee) receives support tailored to their needs and circumstances, along with access to group discussions and information sessions. Building on the success of the initial pilot phase, the programme has expanded its reach and impact, delivering transformative support for young people and their families.

"It's helpful in progressing my career. I've had a productive few months with the programme. The sessions provide stability and routine. I'm more organised now."

Programme development

The year began with a pilot programme supporting four mentees who worked closely with their mentor to develop goals and navigate pathways into education, training and employment. All demonstrated consistent progress, preparing for vocational courses and reconnecting with education. One young person secured a college placement, another engaged positively with local authority support and another joined a youth advocacy board to champion GRT voices.

This success has sparked a surge in interest, with numbers of young people supported growing from four to over 30 by the end 2024. Notably, there has been a small but significant increase in young women participating, reflecting the programme's success in fostering trust within the community. Families have also played a pivotal role by referring siblings and encouraging peers to join.



34 young people supported



70 hours of one-to-one mentoring



3 group information sessions



17 young people on the waiting list



6 employment events attended

Partnerships and community engagement

Community outreach and collaboration have been central to the programme's success, building a robust pipeline of referrals and applicants. Partnerships are being developed with trades recruitment services, local colleges and training providers to enable access to vocational training and skills development. Relationships with local agencies such as London Youth, Youth Justice Services and Children's

"I love coming here because I get a lot of extra support. It makes me feel like I'm not doing it alone. It makes things feel possible!"

Services have opened the way to broader support networks and increased referrals.



Long-term impact

Bright Futures aims to have lasting impact. By tailoring support to each young person's unique circumstances, the programme helps them develop essential skills, resilience and confidence.

"They will listen to you and won't influence or force their opinion on you."

Regular mentoring sessions, group workshops and family engagement inspire young people to take ownership of their futures.

In the face of a housing crisis...

The ongoing housing crisis has severely impacted families seeking safe and stable housing. Failures by local authorities' housing teams have left many families vulnerable, facing uncertainty and unsuitable living conditions. In response, LGT has advocated for families and ensured their rights are recognised and needs addressed.

Our work not only helps families secure the housing they need but also empowers them to engage more confidently with the system and stand up for their rights.

The challenge of Universal Credit

LGT has witnessed a significant rise in demand for support services since the government began accelerating the migration to Universal Credit. This shift has posed new challenges for many community members, particularly those with complex literacy needs.

In response, LGT delivered a series of dedicated workshops offering tailored guidance and equipping individuals

"At LGT's workshop I felt very confident going through with the migration and understanding Universal Credit more. I'm very grateful to have this support."

with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate the Universal Credit system. The sessions aimed to break down barriers to understanding and ensure that those we support are not left behind during this transition. They empowered participants and built their confidence and self-sufficiency in managing digital forms, processes and interactions with the system.



Pressure on new government to act on homelessness

Ahead of the July General Election, LGT joined 50 organisations led by housing charity Shelter in signing a joint letter to politicians challenging them to stop blaming racialised minorities and immigrants for the housing crisis.

LGT called on all parties “to stamp out scapegoating and focus on building genuinely affordable social homes as the only sustainable way to end the housing emergency.” Immediately after the election we followed up these demands with the new government, asking it to address the discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers which results in violations of housing rights and leads to disproportionate homelessness.

LGT works with more than...

50

...other organisations to improve the provision of adequate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.



Traveller engagement with Islington consultations

focus

In August, LGT began supporting Islington Travellers and Gypsies to engage with council planners who were looking to find land in the borough for pitches. There were encampments in Islington until the 1990s, but they were pushed out by gentrification, new development and zoning laws. Some young families have lived their entire lives in temporary accommodation or culturally unsuitable bricks and mortar.

There is an assessed need for 10 or 11 new pitches in Islington over the next eight years and, over consultation meetings in September and October, community members rallied together to give Islington Council advice on what kind of land and homes would be appropriate.

One young Traveller told council planners: “At the start, when our friends told us about these meetings, I thought nothing



would come of it, as usual. But now that I have seen that you are listening to us, I am beginning to think: maybe this time they will actually build something for our community.”

LGT will continue to monitor the progress of pitch delivery, and hope to see something built in 2027.



18
LGT supported members of the community to improve living conditions on sites across 18 London boroughs

Targeting new sites and living conditions

LGT has continued to work with many boroughs to support site delivery and improve living conditions at existing sites which have been declared unliveable.

Haringey

LGT has worked with residents who have been fighting for their right to live on a site for over a decade, supporting them through consultation processes for three new sites.

Enfield

LGT has linked Enfield council and community members as a number of potential site proposals are considered with the aim of bringing about the first council-run site in the borough.



© JACK LILLEYWHITE

Hackney

LGT staff have been instrumental in connecting Hackney Health and community members to ensure their views are heard and they are able to access essential medical services such as breast cancer screening.

Bromley

LGT has supported residents of the Star Lane site through the early stages of regeneration after it had fallen into bad disrepair.

Brent

LGT has been supporting residents of the Lynton Close site as they face urgent issues of overcrowding and fire risk.

“Site maintenance and refurbishments are really important subjects for us. We try to get things fixed, because the situation is dangerous for our lives, but it seems the council officers are avoiding us.”

Highlighting racism in Mayoral Elections

focus

LGT's policy work has focused on converting major external developments into opportunities for positive change. One of those opportunities came with the London Mayoral Elections.

A Mayoral Election manifesto produced by the London Gypsy and Traveller Forum provided LGT with the mandate to ask all mayoral candidates to: oppose racism directed at Gypsies and Travellers; support action on the mental health crisis affecting communities; and address the acute shortage of culturally suitable accommodation in London.



In March, LGT hosted candidates and representatives of the Green, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties, who answered questions from community members.

The candidates were all elected, so LGT is now following their involvement on Gypsy and Traveller issues through the London Assembly, where they are active in the housing, planning and regeneration and fire committees.

The Police Act ruling

In May, the High Court ruled that sections of the Police Act 2022 which allowed police to seize caravans and ban Gypsies and Travellers from an area for 12 months were incompatible with human rights legislation. LGT supported Liberty and Friends, Families and Travellers in the case. Since then, we have been working with partner organisations to ensure that the Police Act is revised in ways that protect nomadism. Gypsies and Travellers should not be at risk of eviction and criminalisation just because there is a dire shortage of authorised stopping places and permanent pitches.

Progress on national planning framework

With partner organisations and planning lawyers, LGT prepared and submitted a response to the government's consultation on reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework. The revised policy, published in December, showed that the government had listened to some of LGT's main points: applications for sites will be given some weight in favour of approval, even in the Green Belt; and a new definition of eligible applicants removes the requirement for Gypsies and Travellers to demonstrate that they continue to live a nomadic way of life in order for them to be counted as "Gypsies and Travellers".

London Forum

London Gypsy and Traveller Forum meetings have been taking place since 2004 and November's meeting saw 14 community members from across London sending in questions or coming to speak directly to councillors, assembly members and council and Greater London Authority staff. They raised issues about site audits, dereliction and refurbishments.

"The lady speaking up at the Forum about the poor state of her site is voicing the experience of site residents all over London."

"We want our engagement through the London Forum to have an impact, and we will come again to the next one."



Other policy actions

- LGT submitted a report on homelessness in London to the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, along with a video statement underlining the human consequences of homelessness.
- LGT submitted responses to local plans in Camden, the City, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Lewisham, Newham, Sutton and Tower Hamlets.
- LGT sent its analysis of the draft London-wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment to the consultants who wrote the report and to the GLA.

Building relationships, creating safe spaces

LGT's family work has grown significantly over the past 12 months, reflecting our commitment to helping families overcome the many challenges they face when involved with social services. We have provided tailored advice, advocacy, and practical assistance to address critical issues such as housing, education, health and access to services. By building trusted relationships and creating safe spaces, we have empowered many families to navigate complex systems, preserve cultural traditions and build resilience. In turn, this work can help families find stability, stand up against discrimination and create better opportunities for future generations.

Many families face systemic biases, cultural misunderstandings and lack of trust, which can lead to heightened tensions and miscommunication with social services. Our culturally-aware

"I truly believe that if you had not been involved in our case it would be totally different – because we are the first Traveller family they have dealt with."

advocacy has helped families understand their rights and responsibilities and ensured that their voices are heard in decision-making processes.

This work requires in-depth, weekly support over many months. But it not only reduces stress and improves relationships with professionals but also helps to prevent unnecessary interventions by addressing issues early and constructively. Over the year, we have empowered families to navigate challenges confidently, ensuring their needs are met with fairness and respect.



© ELISABETH BLANCHET

12 families supported...

Over the past year we have provided in-depth support to 12 families across 8 London boroughs



...in 8 London boroughs

Developing cultural competence in councils

Building on our work educating councils about negotiated stopping which we began in 2023, during 2024 we successfully piloted a new professional cultural competence training package. It has been delivered to three local authorities. Two training sessions were also provided to the Greater London Authority housing and planning teams.

This training for service providers and decision makers provides a basis for increased understanding about the issues affecting Gypsy and Traveller communities and lays a foundation for creating more inclusive services. The training programme will be scaled up in the coming year.



"I will use what I learned to engage more effectively and respectfully with Gypsy and Roma communities. By applying cultural competence, I will recognise and honour their history, traditions and values. Knowledge of relevant laws and social challenges will guide my advocacy and support efforts."

"I benefitted from learning about the lived experience of Gypsies and Travellers in London today. I found the heritage map of London, showing Gypsy and Traveller history and movements, really fascinating."

"I have learnt that we need to get more stakeholder buy-in to expand negotiated stopping arrangements, particularly from local authorities."

Our team

A big thank you to our brilliant staff team and highly committed trustees.



STAFF

Debby Kennett, Chief Executive

Ilinca Diaconescu, Policy and Campaigns Coordinator (until March 24)

Tom Margetson, Community Development and Campaigns Lead

Nancy Hawker, Policy and Research officer (from April 24)

Mena Mongan, Community Engagement Officer

Padmini Ravi, Programme Lead – Bright Futures mentoring

Teyha Hadley, Project worker – Bright Futures mentoring (from June 24)

Stephane Arthur, Bright Futures Youth Mentor (from December 24)

Geraldine Lindsay, Skills Development Coordinator

Olli Wells, Accommodation Advice Triage Worker

Joe Clark, Accommodation Advice Admin assistant (from Feb 24)

Orlando Phipps, Accommodation Advice and Advocacy worker (from April 24)

FREELANCE SUPPORT

Richard Lush, Administration and Operations

Adam Gardner, Resilience strategy

Eunice Onyema, Finance

Zemichael Abhra, Finance

Fran Ferris-Ockwell, Fundraising

Simon Crompton, Media and communications

Jack Lilleywhite, Community development

Raegan Boothe, Community development

John Gray, Community development

Hils Tranter, Design

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Richard Bennett, Treasurer

Marian Mahoney, Vice Chair

Tunji Makanju

Sarah Edwards

Giorgio Mariani

Chelsea McDonagh

Sally Barter (from May 24)

Tessa Buchanan (from Sept 24)

Accounts

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31st March 2024.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £	31.3.23 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations	2	45,000	414,777	459,777	384,060
Investment income	3	4,948	-	4,948	1,558
Other income	4	7,563	-	7,563	4,875
Total		57,511	414,777	472,288	390,493
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities					
Policy/ Strategic Development		24,853	79,836	104,689	99,888
Youth		21,078	39,620	60,698	66,181
Community Development		5,301	235,313	240,614	176,021
Total		51,232	354,769	406,001	342,090
NET INCOME		6,279	60,008	66,287	48,403
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		161,366	59,934	221,300	172,897
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		167,645	119,942	287,587	221,300

**LONDON
GYPSIES &
TRAVELLERS**

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