Article 12 in Scotland

Young Gypsy Travellers’ Lives [YGTL]

Discrimination and On-Line Media

[Analysis focused on Scotland]

Pilot On-line Media Audit: 1ST September 2011- 31ST March 2012

May 2012

© Article 12 in Scotland 2012
**Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities [1995]**

**Article 6 [1]:** The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

**National Union of Journalists: Code of Conduct**

9] Produc[es] no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

**Press Complaints Commission: Editors’ Code of Practice**

1] Accuracy:

i] The press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures.

12] Discrimination:

i] The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.

ii] Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story.

**Young Gypsy Travellers’ Lives volunteer:**

The media targets us, there is never anything positive said about Travellers and they always stereotype us. It makes people judge us.
Summary

*Article 12 in Scotland* is committed to addressing the unethical reporting exhibited by many publications concerning Gypsy/Travellers, not only in Scotland, but also UK wide and further afield. Misleading and unbalanced articles are a key driving force in the discrimination experienced by Gypsy/Travellers living in Scotland, and indeed the UK as a whole, today. Our concerns regarding media coverage have been echoed by the young Gypsy/Travellers who volunteer for *Article 12 in Scotland’s Young Gypsy Travellers’ Lives* project; prejudice on the grounds of their ethnic identity is part of their, their families’ and their community’s everyday reality. *Article 12 in Scotland* finds this unacceptable.

Not only is this type of journalism immoral and unethical, it also directly violates journalistic codes of conduct; fuelling negative myths and stereotypes, demonising the Gypsy/Traveller community and further segregating them from their settled peers.

This report details the findings of our *pilot* media audit which has focused on *on-line media* in Scotland, and has also provided the members of *Article 12 in Scotland’s Young Gypsy Travellers’ Lives* project Steering Group with new skills [a key objective of the project being the ‘skilling-up’ and empowerment of young Gypsy/Travellers in order to enable them to have their own voices heard by governments, professionals and wider society in general]. This pilot audit has been extremely useful in not only highlighting negative media reporting, but also in allowing us to refine our search lists and criteria before our more in-depth annual audits which will take place over the next 3 years.

*Article 12 in Scotland* found:

- 71 articles in 6 months over 20 on-line Scottish publications. This is disproportionate; not only with regard to the population of Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland, or the fact this is much higher than the reporting of any other ethnic minority, but also considering that this audit was carried out over the winter and spring months, a time when many Gypsy/Travellers are not ‘on the road’.

- The top 5 ‘offenders’, from within our specific remit, are, in order: the *Scottish Daily Mail*, the *Press and Journal*, the *Scottish Sun*, the *Evening Express* and *The Scotsman*.

- Nearly three quarters of articles discussed the issue of sites [official, unauthorised or proposed], with over a third focusing on the Gypsy/Traveller community in general and a quarter concerned with crime.

- Over half of these articles were categorised as negative, with nearly a quarter deemed racist. Less than 10% of articles audited by *Article 12 in Scotland* were classed by our organisation as being positive pieces of information concerning the Gypsy/Traveller community.

- We were however encouraged by the fact that over three quarters of articles did not use misleading and premeditated archive(stock photos. Nonetheless, a fifth did – contributing to the reinforcement of harmful negative myths and stereotypes.
• Nearly half of the articles audited used the leading word ‘illegal’ and around a third used ‘eviction’; again fostering fear, ignorance and segregation.
• Almost three quarters of publications did not capitalise ‘Gypsy’ and/or ‘Traveller’. This is disrespectful and does not give due regard to ethnic status.
• Social media, in particular social networking sites, has created an environment from which individuals and groups can make worrying statements and suggestions regarding Gypsy/Travellers [and indeed other ethnic minorities] via public platforms; these range from ridiculing on the grounds of a person’s ethnicity, to inciting racial hatred and establishing race hate groups.

Article 12 in Scotland believe that journalists and their editors have a duty and responsibility to ensure that they are not only engaging in ethical reporting, but also effectively monitoring any affiliated on-line forums for racially motivated, pejorative comments made by their readers.

In spite of having recognised ethnic minority status from the Scottish Government, the Scottish Gypsy/Traveller community continues to be marginalised from mainstream society. This is, in part, fuelled by media coverage of their culture, and is sadly unlikely to change until the media, in all forms, ceases publishing negative, misleading and unbalanced articles.
Contents

Introduction .......................................... Page 1
Rationale .............................................. Page 2
Methodology .......................................... Page 3
Findings .................................................. Page 4
A right to fair reporting ................................ Page 9
Conclusions and recommendations ................. Page 10
Appendix: Visuals ...................................... Page 11
Introduction

*Article 12 in Scotland* is a non-governmental organisation that works, through the medium of peer education, to promote young people’s rights as set out in international human rights charters. Through our *Young Gypsy Travellers' Lives* project, *Article 12 in Scotland* aims to significantly improve relations between the Gypsy/Traveller and settled communities, particularly, but not exclusively, between young people; thus building bridges, bonds and links between people and communities of different cultures, and enabling young Gypsy/Travellers to contribute as equal citizens to decision making processes and live their lives free from prejudice.

The *Young Gypsy Travellers' Lives* project - which is led by a group of young Scottish Gypsy/Travellers, and staffed by members from both the Gypsy/Traveller and the settled community - is committed to addressing the discrimination and prejudice faced by Gypsy/Travellers living in Scotland today.

The negative, disrespectful, and, at times, downright racist way in which certain representatives of the British media portray the Gypsy/Traveller community has long been one of *Article 12 in Scotland’s* key concerns: not only for the safety and well-being of the Gypsy/Traveller community, but also as a barrier to positive change and bridge building with members of the settled community. Our concerns have been echoed by members of *Article 12 in Scotland’s Young Gypsy Travellers’ Lives [YGTL]* project Steering Group, who have identified negative media coverage as one of the main driving forces in the discrimination faced by their community.

Unbalanced reporting can and indeed does create prejudice; perpetuating dangerous and offensive myths and stereotypes and helping to foster racial hatred – further fuelling the division, fear and mistrust between the Gypsy/Traveller and settled communities. The *Equality and Human Rights Commission* rightly state that the negative portrayal of the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller community ‘serves to validate the idea that somehow Gypsy Travellers are fair game - that it is not racist to stereotype or discriminate against a Gypsy Traveller [sic].’

Consequently, *Article 12 in Scotland* has committed to an extensive on-line Scottish media audit; starting in September 2011 [as part of a 6 month pilot and training for the YGTL Steering Group], this audit will be on-going until March 2015 and will be updated regularly via an annual statistical report.

NB: The Scottish Government’s official terminology ‘Gypsy/Traveller’ has been employed throughout this report. However, it is important to note that this term is not accepted by all families. Indeed, many Scottish Gypsy/Travellers prefer to self-define as ‘Traveller’.

---

Rationale

*Article 12 in Scotland* believes that Scottish Gypsy/Travellers are an extremely vulnerable group in the hands of the media. Entering key words such as ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Traveller’ into the search facility of many on-line publications will usually reveal myriad negative articles and racist commentaries; ranging from ridiculing and ‘poking fun’, to inciting racial hatred and talk of evoking the ‘final solution’: ‘Send them to Hazelhead’ [a crematorium located in Aberdeen] where the final solution is obvious. As evidenced by the above comment, tensions in Aberdeen City and Shire have reached crisis point, a lack of authorised sites and the blocking off of traditional stopping places have heightened animosity between the transient and settled communities; a theme which is replicated throughout Scotland.

*Article 12 in Scotland* has been monitoring certain publications in the North East of Scotland since 2009 [it is noteworthy to mention here that many articles have now been removed and on-line reader comments/full articles disabled for those who do not have a paying subscription]. A seemingly innocent article in the *Press and Journal*, a daily publication in Scotland [read by 138,000 readers every day and 287,000 readers every week - which is approximately 45% of the current population], entitled *There are all sorts of ways to give people a bad name* is just one example of the media campaign against Gypsy/Roma/Travellers here in Scotland. This article draws you in with a commentary concerning a respectful silence at a Scottish football game, but half way through turns into an anti-Roma rant; the commentary includes:

‘You can’t walk 10 yards without tripping over some old girl in a shawl or having your ears assailed by some swarthy bloke playing the Romanian national anthem on his accordion. [...] Within minutes, they had hobbled and wheeled themselves off in every direction in search of kind-hearted Dubliners. [...] The worry is that, with the dire collapse of the Irish economy, these gangs will set their sights on Scotland. Thanks to the diversity training that the Scottish constabulary have been undergoing of late, in which they have been taught to treat these travellers with the utmost respect, the beggars could clean up over here with impunity. [...] If anyone dares to criticise them, they will probably find themselves up on a charge of inciting racial hatred. [...] Perhaps I should start packing a bag for an extended stay at Her Majesty’s pleasure [sic].’

*Article 12 in Scotland* believes that this type of misleading journalism is unethical and dangerous. *Article 12 in Scotland* does not accept that representatives of the Scottish media would report on any other ethnic minority in the same way in which many publications currently report on, and demonise, Gypsy/Travellers. We believe that the media plays a fundamental role in keeping anti-Gypsy/Traveller sentiment alive; it is for this reason that we have committed not only to such a lengthy audit, but also to eradicating this unacceptable form of ethnic discrimination.

---

2 Reader’s comment, *Press and Journal* on-line [July 2010]: article and comment since removed.


4 *Press and Journal*, 7th January 2011, no author: *There are all sorts of ways to give people a bad name*. On-line at: *Press and Journal*. 
Methodology

This report outlines the findings of our 6 month pilot on-line Scottish media audit of local, national, daily and weekly Scottish publications. We focused solely on on-line media as, despite being one of the most important and influential means of [instant] information sharing around today - particularly with a readers’ comment facility available for most larger on-line publications, this is an area that [in terms of impact on the Gypsy/Traveller community] has not been analysed in the past.

*Article 12 in Scotland’s* fundamental goal for the *YGTL* project is to empower and ‘skill-up’ young Gypsy/Travellers in order that they may speak for themselves – and their community – to bring about real and lasting positive change and to enjoy the fundamental human rights that members of the settled community take as given. The key to this goal is participation; with this in mind, all members of the *YGTL* project team were allocated a list of on-line publications to check on a regular basis – these publications were chosen to reflect not only every jurisdiction in Scotland, but also to cover various types and sizes of publications: daily and weekly, local and national. Internet searches were also undertaken and ‘Google Alerts’ for keywords set up [which have generated thousands of on-line hits globally in the last 6 months for racist terms such as ‘pikey’, ‘gypo’, ‘tink’ and so on].

In order to ensure a sense of continuity, *Article 12 in Scotland* created an ‘audit form’. This form was broken up into various sections and gave a sense of structure to the audit. Nonetheless, due to the fast-paced nature of the internet, the pre-requisite for expensive on-line subscriptions, differing news stories between on-line and print editions, a lack of an interactive on-line presence for certain publications and the inability to read the full story on-line [various publications do this in order to try and up print media sales], *Article 12 in Scotland* does not claim to have captured every article within our specific time-frame. It is also important to note that this pilot audit was undertaken during the winter of 2011 and spring of 2012; many Gypsy/Travellers do not travel at these times of year – hence a dip in the volume of articles.
Findings

Article 12 in Scotland found:

[A visual representation of our findings may be viewed in the appendix to this report.]

NB: Due to rounding up/down some percentages may not add up to 100.

Volume:

- 71 articles over 6 months in 20 publications, a number we feel is disproportionate not only to the amount of Gypsy/Travellers actually on the road during the winter and early spring months, but also to the population size of Gypsy/Travellers living in Scotland.
- The publication with the highest volume of articles was the *Scottish Daily Mail* [with 18 articles equating to 25% of the total found].
- The *Press & Journal* had the second largest amount of articles with 12 [17%], followed closely by the *Scottish Sun* with 11 articles [15%], the *Evening Express* with 6 [9%] and *The Scotsman* with 4 articles [6%].
- It is worthy of note, that the *Press and Journal* and *Evening Express* are the two regional papers with the highest volume of articles.

Themes:

NB: Many articles had two or more themes.

- 72% of articles were focused on sites [unauthorised encampments, official sites, plans for new official sites and so on].
- 35% discussed the Gypsy/Traveller community.
- 25% focused on crime.
- 4% of articles were concerned with the *Channel 4* ‘documentary’ *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*.
- 3% discussed potential damage to the environment.
- 1% reported that the Gypsy/Traveller population may damage the local economy.

These findings give us a clear indication that the issue of sites is one shared by both communities. A lack of decent, appropriately located sites undoubtedly leads to heightened tensions, however, there appears to be reluctance from both local settled people and a number of their elected [and indeed unelected] representatives to commit to having a Gypsy/Traveller site in their area. Until this issue is resolved, unauthorised encampments will continue to be the norm, the media will persist in reporting on them and tensions will continue to rise.
The Association of Chief Police Officers states that they have no disproportionate problems of criminal activities within the Gypsy/Traveller community. Yet, over a third of articles focused on the Gypsy/Traveller community in general, with a quarter reporting on the perceived levels of crime that follow. This is not helpful, and Article 12 in Scotland would like to see Scottish publications taking the lead in more balanced reporting.

**Tone:**

NB: Many articles were classed as both negative and racist; Article 12 in Scotland believes it is important to highlight both.

- 58% of the articles audited had an overwhelmingly negative tone.
- 27% remained neutral.
- 14% were believed to have racist undertones.
- Only 8% of articles were categorised as positive.
- 16% have been classed as ‘other’, including: sensationalist [4%], reporting on racial discrimination [3%], articles influenced by My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding [3%], leading headlines [1%], patronising [1%] and unbalanced [4%].

Article 12 in Scotland finds these figures disturbing and reiterates that we feel this would not likely be the case with any other recognised ethnic minority. It is also important to note that of the articles classed as neutral, many were only available on-line in an edited form – the full article could easily take on a different tone.

**Use of archive/stock photos:**

- Yes: 20%
- No: 78%
- Unsure: 1%

Although we are pleased to note that the majority of publications audited did not appear to be using old archive/stock photos, we feel that 20% is still completely unacceptable. The premeditated use of old photos is unethical and goes against the Press Complaints Commission’s Editors’ Code of Practice. The practice of using old photos to deliberately misrepresent a situation reinforces myths and stereotypes [e.g. concerning mess] and adds to the negative view of Gypsy/Travellers held by members of the settled community.

**‘Leading words’:**

NB: Many articles had two or more ‘leading words’.

- 39% of articles mentioned the word ‘illegal’ at least once.
- 32% used the word ‘eviction’.
- 10% were concerned with ‘fear’.

---


• 7% reported ‘invasion’.
• 4% spoke of rubbish.
• 63% were classed as ‘other’, including: legal action/costs to tax payers/benefits; use of ‘war-like’ terminology such as siege/war-zone/take-over/raids; slavery; crime/illicit/threats; riots/violence/destruction; ‘problems’/anger/frustration/fury and stereotypes such as outrageous/stupid/My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding/’grabbing’/’bling’.

The use of leading words is irresponsible and can be likened to subliminal messaging; repeated use of words such as ‘illegal’, ‘invasion’ and ‘fear’ can lead to all sorts of negative doubts, misunderstandings, frustrations and myths about the Gypsy/Traveller community and culture; which in turn keep division and hatred alive.

Capitalisation of ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Traveller’ in audited articles:

• Yes: 15%
• No: 73%
• Unsure: 11% [used when ‘Gypsy’ or ‘Traveller’ was mentioned only once, at the start of a headline or sentence, therefore naturally capitalised].
• In their resource for the media, the Equality and Human Rights Commission state that ‘Gypsy/Traveller’ should always be capitalised [to give due regard to ethnic status].

In addition to the media audit that is the subject of this report, Article 12 in Scotland is annually auditing 87 Scottish newspapers [covering a cross-section of Scotland] in order to monitor use of capitalisation:

• In April 2011 only 2% of the publications in question capitalised ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Traveller’, in April 2012 this had increased to 4%.
• However, the number of publications not capitalising also increased from 49% in 2011 to 54% in 2012, with those receiving mixed results decreasing from 20% in 2011 to 9% in 2012, and an increase in publications classed as ‘N/A’ from 27% in 2011 to 32% in 2012. Article 12 in Scotland will continue to monitor these publications for the duration of the project in order to accurately track any trends and changes.

Examples of quotes:

From publications:

‘Erskine community council secretary Hugh Cameron takes an even stronger view, believing no public money at all should be "wasted" on travellers who choose to live outside society. He added: “We are completely against any site in Erskine. They tried in the past and it failed miserably. [Travellers] treat this place with no respect. And it's the majority that cause problems - not the minority. We vow to fight these proposals.” ’ [sic] 8

---

2 The Gazette [Renfrewshire], 24th November 2011, Henry Ainslie: Travellers’ site fury.
[Grampian Police would like to] ‘thank the Gypsy/Traveller community for their patience and assistance.’

‘We are led to believe that all gypsy travellers live this lifestyle and such flagrant misrepresentation is highly damaging to a sector of society that already faces enough misguided public criticism and contempt. [...] Perhaps the best way to describe Big Fat Gypsy Weddings is worryingly entertaining; enjoy it, by all means, but do try to keep a worried, furrowed brow plastered to your face at all times to at least attempt to redeem the whole experience [sic].’

Reader comments:

- ‘Watch your belongings […] the police won’t help you when they steal from you.’
- ‘Take care not to be taken as a slave!’
- ‘The whole lifestyle seems so tacky, irreverent, scummy and tasteless.’
- ‘Freeloaders that the taxman should be all over like a rash.’
- ‘Gypsy isn’t a race; it’s a way of life…’
- ‘I am sick to death of these pathetic “travellers”! As disgusting as I find them to be I must say they have a feral mentality of survival and have been able to twist our own law against us for their ends [...] just go and leave!!! [sic]’
- ‘One feels for the people in houses that have ‘Travellers’ as neighbours.’
- ‘I think they are very seriously disturbed people who at times pose a real threat to law-abiding decent citizens.’
- ‘I doubt if there are 10 people in this country who have a good word to say about these people.’
- ‘I would not trust travellers as far as I could throw them [sic].’
- ‘These “people” have forfeited any rights to be called Human Beings.’
- ‘Not that it will be nice or safe walking past them [Gypsy/Travellers] anyway. Just imagine the stench alone, let alone the unruly kids, dogs etc.’
- ‘Napalm the only solution!!!’
- ‘They are mostly scroungers, who are willing to con the public and pay nothing for the skips, toilets and clean ups.’

---

9 Positively reported BBC News Scotland article, 18th March 2012, no author: Two charged over ‘gun incident’ in Dyce area of Aberdeen.
10 The Student, 21st February 2012, Alastair Grant: Guilt-free TV?
11 Scottish Daily Mail, 2nd February 2012, Andy Dolan: Tear down your protest camp! After two years of protecting green belt against illegal traveller invasion, villagers get THEIR marching orders.
12 Scottish Daily Mail, 2nd February 2012, Paul Harris: Home-made biscuits, tea and unwavering defiance outside illegal gipsy camp that looks set to mirror Dale Farm.
13 Scottish Daily Mail, 9th March 2012, Deborah Arthurs: You’ve got to hand it to her! Sixteen-year-old BFGW bride’s middle finger salute on her special day.
15 Scottish Daily Mail, 23rd February 2012, Leon Watson: ‘We are not a joke, we are human beings’: Travellers hit back at being exploited for ‘entertainment’ by Channel 4’s Big Fat Gypsy Wedding.
16 The Scottish Sun, 25th October 2011, Alex Peake: Gypsy complaint threatens longest UK coastal path.
17 Press & Journal, 20th September 2011: Court order halts moves to clear travellers from UK’s biggest site, Ben Kendall and Neil Lancefield.
Social media:
Another important area to watch is the world of social media; sites such as Facebook are becoming ever more popular and there seems to be a sense of misplaced anonymity with regards to what people post. Indeed, anti-Gypsy/Roma/Traveller groups are prolific on social networking sites; unfortunately as soon as one of such pages is reported and removed, another takes its place. It is worth noting that despite their content violating social networking sites’ terms and conditions, the removal process can take weeks - or in some cases the pages are not removed at all.

Examples of on-line comments from social networking site Facebook:

- ‘I invented a new game, you get a group of pikeys and lock them in a cellar for a month without any food…………… It’s called hungary, hungary gypos [sic].’  
- ‘Why isn’t it legal to shoot gypsies in the face, it should be, I mean there is no law in against shooting dirt and there less than that so it should be ok [sic].’
- ‘Come along and watch Guy Fawks Burn and the McCarthy sisters fashion sense go up in smoke. See how many rockets we can launch into Camp Constant [sic].’

Examples of on-line comments from Yahoo! Answers:

- Question: ‘Has anyone seen any hard bare-knuckle fighting male gypo’s on the news [sic]?’
  Example of answer: ‘Every single one of those parasites needs a bullet between the eyes including the children.’
- Question: ‘How to one become a Pikey? Do you just buy a caravan, throw away the soap and join a group of them [sic]?’
  Example of answer: ‘the only way to become a pikey is to be born one or have a child with your cousin [sic].’
  ‘Oh an live in a caravan pulled by a car with no road tax or insurance [sic].’

Prosecution:
Far from being anonymous, it is relatively easy to trace someone’s real details online. Aberdeenshire has recently seen two individuals charged for comments made on Facebook regarding Gypsy/Travellers:

- One was fined £300 at Stonehaven Serriff Court for branding Gypsy/Travellers ‘pikey filth’ and ‘scum’, going further to state that ‘they cause trouble wherever they go. They are filthy, conniving thieves who think nothing of conning or robbing old folk’.

---
18 Facebook, user comment: 14th August 2011.
19 Facebook, user comment: 16th September 2011.
20 Facebook, user comment: date unknown.
21 Yahoo Answers!, 19th October 2011
22 Yahoo Answers!: http://uk.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20110903020843AAJda1F
23 STV News, 18th January 2012: Pensioner in court over abusive Facebook comments about travellers
Another was given 150 hours of community service for making racially abusive comments and attempting to incite racial hatred by posting comments on their personal Facebook page, and a page entitled ‘Get Travellers Out of Stonehaven [GTOS]’. This person suggested that ‘everyone joins GTOS, won't make a difference, but if it does fail... baseball bats and petrol bombs anyone???’ Referring to Gypsy/Travellers as ‘pikeys’ they called for a peaceful protest stating that interested parties should ‘allow room for the situation to change’. The ‘GTOS’ site had around 360 supporters by the time it was closed down by Facebook.

Article 12 in Scotland believe that social media – social networking sites, blogs and other on-line communities and groups – have a duty to thoroughly monitor all racially aggravated content within their sites. On-line social spaces provide a worrying platform for promoting racial intolerance towards Gypsy/Travellers; ranging from ridiculing and stereotypes, to inciting racial hatred and violence.

A right to fair reporting

Journalists, editors [and indeed anyone else who is involved with any form of media] have a duty and responsibility – under UK Race and Equality Law – to make sure that they report in an ethical fashion [the Scottish Government now recognises Scottish Gypsy/Travellers as an ethnic minority, which brings them under the protection of the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Protected Characteristics of the Equality Act 2010].

Regulatory bodies:

- Press Complaints Commission [PCC]  
  Editors’ Code of Practice: [Code of Practice 2012](#)
- Office of Communications [Ofcom]  
  Ofcom is a statutory body, and therefore has the backing of the law [guidelines can be found at]: [OFCOM](#)
- The National Union of Journalists also have a ‘Code of Conduct’, which may be read here: [NUJ Code of Conduct](#)

Journalists and editors have a responsibility to ensure fair and ethical reporting for all. Tensions between the Gypsy/Traveller community and the settled community will never cease if the media continue to vilify and misrepresent Gypsy/Travellers. It is also imperative that on-line publications step-up to the plate and implement a robust monitoring system in order to eliminate racist, insulting and dangerous reader comments.

Article 12 in Scotland does not claim that all Scottish – and indeed UK-wide - publications, deliberately mislead the public and strive to criminalise the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller population, but we do know that some do. This deliberate misrepresentation [via leading words and the use of archive/stock photos] of an already marginalised community is not only unethical – it also serves to put a whole community in danger.

---

24 Scottish Sun, 8th March 2012: Council worker: Bomb the gypsies [sic]
Conclusions and recommendations

Article 12 in Scotland concludes that the on-line media, both here in Scotland and UK wide, is guilty of publishing a disproportionate amount of articles concerning the Gypsy/Traveller community; this in turn perpetuates negative myths and stereotypes - via means of tone, leading words and headlines, disregard for ethnic status by not capitalising ‘Gypsy’ and/or ‘Traveller’ and the use of archived photos - fostering a negative attitude towards Gypsy/Travellers. We believe this is not in the public’s interest and is serving solely to demonise an already marginalised community.

However, change is possible: Article 12 in Scotland recently carried out several ‘Awareness-Raising/Conflict Resolution’ workshops in Aberdeenshire schools; in order to accurately measure attitudinal change, we asked participants to write three words/statements about Gypsy/Travellers at the beginning of the workshops, then three words/statements again at the end. 82.4% of ‘after’ responses demonstrated a positive change in attitude towards the community. Article 12 in Scotland believes that, with willing, the media can be instrumental in changing negative attitudes towards the Gypsy/Traveller community - thus eradicating what many describe as the last ‘socially acceptable’ form of racism in Scotland.

Recommendations:

- The Scottish Government to take a lead in ensuring publications adhere to regulations, codes of conduct and official guidelines.
- All publications to read the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s guide: Gypsy Travellers in Scotland: A Resource for the Media.
- More balanced and ethical reporting. Article 12 in Scotland would like to see Scottish publications taking a lead in this.
- The implementation of a more robust monitoring system for on-line reader comments/social media sites, and penalties for those who do not comply with regulations concerning ethnicity.
- The implementation of stricter guidelines regarding the reporting of Gypsy/Travellers. Article 12 in Scotland strongly advocates freedom of speech and the right to personal choices/opinions, however, this cannot extend to hate crime – talk of evoking the ‘Final Solution’ can never be acceptable.
- Local authorities to create more decent, appropriately located authorised sites. This would reduce the amount of unauthorised encampments, a key driver in tensions, and lead to less negative media coverage.
Appendix: Visuals

1) Publications audited by *Article 12 in Scotland*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Courier</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perthshire Advertiser</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Daily Mail</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gazette [Erskine]</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Scotsman</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening Express</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Scottish Sun</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press &amp; Journal</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gazette [Renfrewshire]</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkintilloch Herald</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife Today</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Student</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Irvine Herald</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kirkintilloch Herald</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gazette [Renfrewshire]</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland News</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montrose Review</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Due to rounding up/down some percentages may not add up to 100.
2] Common themes found by *Article 12 in Scotland* during the auditing process:

- Sites: 72%
- The Community: 35%
- Crime: 25%
- My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding: 4%
- Damage to the environment: 3%
- Damage to the local economy: 1%

NB: Many articles contained more than one of the common themes above.
3] Tone of articles audited:

NB: Many articles contained more than one of the common tones above.
4] Use of stock – or archived – photos:

NB: Due to rounding up/down some percentages may not add up to 100.
5] Negative/leading key words:

NB: Many articles contained more than one of these common words.
6] Capitalisation of Gypsy/Traveller within audited articles:

![Pie chart showing capitalisation of Gypsy/Traveller]

NB: Due to rounding up/down some percentages may not add up to 100.