Article 12 in Scotland

Young Gypsy Travellers’ Lives [YGTL]

 Discrimination and On-Line Media
[Analysis focused on Scotland]

On-line Media Audit, Year 2: 1st April 2012 - 31st March 2013

June 2013

© Article 12 in Scotland 2013
**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] Produce[s] 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 Year 2 of our annual media audit. This annual media audit is focused on the on-line media in Scotland, and has been instrumental in providing 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 audit is intended to provide an up-date to the pilot audit that was produced by *Article 12 in Scotland* last year¹, and will form an important part of the research for our final, more comprehensive report which will be published at the end of the current *Young Gypsy Travellers’ Lives* project in 2015.

*Article 12 in Scotland* found:

- 193 articles over 12 months, in 32 publications – meaning an average of around 4 articles per week. This number indicates an increase in reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community from our 2011-2012 media audit. *Article 12 in Scotland* feels this number is disproportionate to the population size of Gypsy/Travellers living in Scotland.

- The single publication with the largest amount of articles was *The Courier* with 11% of audited articles; the publications with the second joint-highest volume of articles were the *Press and Journal*, and its sister publication the *Evening Express* – each publication accounted for 10% of audited articles, equating to a fifth of all press regarding the Gypsy/Traveller community in Scotland.

- 9% of audited articles for the year 2012-2013 came from this the *Guardian*, however, it is worthy of note that all *Guardian* articles audited by *Article 12 in Scotland* were classed as either ‘positive’ or ‘neutral’ indicating a much more balanced approach to reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community when there are no local agendas present.

---

¹ A copy of the *Young Gypsy Travellers’ Lives* pilot media audit may be downloaded here: [http://www.article12.org/A12_Media_Audit_Pilot_2012_Final.pdf](http://www.article12.org/A12_Media_Audit_Pilot_2012_Final.pdf)
- *The Scottish Sun* came in as the publication with the fifth highest number of audited articles with 6%. This indicates that there is still a national tabloid interest in the Gypsy/Traveller community and that articles are not confined to ‘local interest/information’.

- 59% of articles were focused on sites [unauthorised encampments, official sites, plans for new official sites and so on], 51% discussed the Gypsy/Traveller community in general, 20% of articles contained negative stereotyping, 14% focused on crime and 2% of articles were concerned with the Channel 4 ‘documentary’ *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. Only 1.5% reported on life from the perspective of a member of the Gypsy/Traveller community, indicating that the press is still focused on reporting from the viewpoint of the settled community.

- A tenth of articles were classed as positive, however, negative reporting still accounted for two fifths of audited articles, with nearly another tenth falling within the categories of discriminatory, racist and misleading – this means that nearly 50% of articles are still portraying the Gypsy/Traveller community in a negative light.

- We are pleased to note that the majority of publications audited did not appear to be using old archive/stock photos, indeed this number has decreased by 2% since last year, however, we feel that 18% is still completely unacceptable.

- 13% of articles used the word ‘illegal’, with 12% mentioning ‘rubbish’, 6% focusing on ‘fear’ and 3% discussing ‘anger’. These leading words are not helpful and are instrumental in fostering negative stereotypes and mistrust.

- Nearly two fifths of publications audited still do 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 noted that various publications reported on the Scottish Government’s Equal Opportunities Committee’s Enquiry ‘Where Gypsy/Travellers Live’, this has not only increased the volume of relevant articles but has also increased the amount of ‘neutral’ reporting. Article 12 in Scotland welcomes this report and its findings.

*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 the media coverage of their culture, and is sadly unlikely to change until the media, in all forms, ceases publishing negative, misleading and unbalanced articles. The campaign continues.
## Contents

Introduction  
Page 1

Rationale  
Page 2

Methodology  
Page 3

Findings  
Page 4

A right to fair reporting  
Page 10

The *Leveson Enquiry*  
Page 10

*Where Gypsy/Travellers Live: Equal Opportunities Committee* Enquiry  
Page 11

Conclusions and recommendations  
Page 13

Appendix: Visuals

Publications  
Page 14

Themes  
Page 15

Tone  
Page 16

Stock Photos  
Page 17

Negative/Leading Words  
Page 18

Capitalisation  
Page 19
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.’

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 the beginning of 2015, allowing us to track changes in reporting 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 the on-line reader comments/full articles section is 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 day⁴], 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].’⁵

*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 criminalise, 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.

---

³ Reader’s comment, *Press and Journal* on-line [July 2010]: article and comment since removed.


⁵ *Press and Journal*, 7th January 2011, no author: There are all sorts of ways to give people a bad name. On-line at [http://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/Article.aspx/2079711?UserKey](http://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/Article.aspx/2079711?UserKey)
Methodology

This report outlines the findings of our Year 2 on-line Scottish media audit of local, national, daily and weekly Scottish publications. We have 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 invited to take part in the auditing process, allowing them to become involved in the regular checking and analysing of relevant articles published in their local press. The publications audited have been 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 are also undertaken and, out of interest, ‘Google Alerts’ for keywords have been set up [which generate thousands of on-line hits globally every week 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 remit.
Findings

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

NB: Due to rounding up/down, and the overlapping of certain categories, some percentages may not add up to 100.

Article 12 in Scotland found:

Volume:

- 193 articles over 12 months in 32 publications [averaging around 4 articles per week]. This number indicates an increase in reporting on the community from our 2011-2012 media audit, which found 72 articles over a 6 month pilot period. Article 12 in Scotland feels this number is disproportionate to the population size of Gypsy/Travellers living in Scotland, and highlights the significant ‘interest’ the media has in reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community.

- The single publication with the largest amount of articles was The Courier with 11% of audited articles. The Courier is a widely read regional paper, covering Angus, Tayside and Fife – all areas with on-going issues concerning Gypsy/Traveller sites and a lack of authorised pitches.

- The publications with the second joint highest volume of articles were the Press and Journal, and its sister publication the Evening Express – each publication accounted for 10% of audited articles, equating to a fifth of all press correspondence audited by Article 12 in Scotland during our Year 2 audit. Considering that these two publications are both regional papers, with an extremely high readership in the North East of Scotland, Article 12 in Scotland finds this statistic worrying.

- This year the Guardian was also included to give a sense of balance. 9% of audited articles for the year 2012-2013 came from this publication, however, it is worthy of note that all Guardian articles audited by Article 12 in Scotland were classed as either ‘positive’ or ‘neutral’, indicating a much more balanced approach to reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community when there are no local agendas present.

- The Scottish Sun came in as the publication with the fifth highest number of audited articles with 6%. This indicates that there is still a national tabloid interest in the Gypsy/Traveller community and that articles are not confined to ‘local interest/information’.

- Article 12 in Scotland noted that various publications reported on the Scottish Government’s Equal Opportunities Committee’s Enquiry ‘Where Gypsy/Travellers Live’, this has not only increased the volume of relevant articles but also increased the amount of ‘neutral’ reporting. This will be reviewed in our Year 3 audit to ensure that this trend continues.
Themes:

NB: Many articles had two or more themes.

- 59% of articles were focused on sites [unauthorised encampments, official sites, plans for new official sites and so on].
- 51% discussed the Gypsy/Traveller community.
- 20% of articles contained negative stereotyping.
- 14% focused on crime.
- 2% of articles were concerned with the Channel 4 ‘documentary’ My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding.
- 0.5% reported on council election pledges.
- 0.5% started with a misleading headline.
- Only 0.5% reported on eviction from the perspective of the Gypsy/Traveller community, 0.5% concerned education and 0.5% spoke of the success of a member of the Gypsy/Traveller community.

Although reporting on sites has decreased from 72% in 2011-2012 to 59% in 2012-2013, well over a half of all articles are still concerned with this issue. Until the issue of sites is resolved, unauthorised encampments will continue to be the norm, the media will persist in reporting on them and tensions will continue to rise. This combined with the fact that articles reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community have increased from 35% to 51% over the past year indicates a trend within the media regarding their interest in the community as a whole.

Reporting on crime has decreased from 25% in 2011-2012, to 14% in 2012-2013. Although this in itself is a positive change, Article 12 in Scotland feels that this volume is still unwarranted: the Association of Chief Police Officers states that they have no disproportionate problems of criminal activities within the Gypsy/Traveller community. Yet, nearly one in five articles focused on ‘crime’ within or as a result of the Gypsy/Traveller community, while a fifth were guilty of negative stereotyping.

Tone:

NB: Many articles contained two tones e.g. negative/discriminatory.

- 10% of articles were classed as positive.
- 38% were overwhelmingly negative.
- 54% were audited as neutral.
- 7% we classed as discriminatory.
- 1% were identified as downright racist.
- 0.5% were of a misleading nature.

---


http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/12inequalities_experienced_by_gypsy_and_traveler_communities_a_review.pdf
Article 12 in Scotland is pleased to report that the number of negative articles audited during Year 2 has decreased from 58% in 2011-2012 to 38%. This is a good result, however, as mentioned previously in this report, many articles reported on the Scottish Government’s Equal Opportunities Committee’s Enquiry ‘Where Gypsy/Travellers Live’ – this may have influenced reporting behaviour this year and Article 12 in Scotland will be interested to see if this trend continues throughout the remainder of our audit.

An increase in positive reporting has also been noted, from 8% in Year 1, to 10% in Year 2, with an increase in neutral reporting rising from 27% to 54% this year. This again is a positive change and one that will hopefully continue. Nonetheless, negative reporting still accounted for over a third of audited articles, with nearly another 10% falling within the categories of discriminatory, racist and misleading – this means that nearly 50% of articles are still portraying the Gypsy/Traveller community in a negative light. Once again, Article 12 in Scotland finds this not only disproportionate to the community as a whole, but also completely unacceptable and indicative of the long way we still have to go in order to ensure fair and balanced reporting for this marginalised community.

Again, 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: 18%
- No: 76%
- Unsure: 6%

Although we are pleased to note that the majority of publications audited did not appear to be using old archive/stock photos, indeed this number has decreased by 2% since last year, we still feel that 18% is completely unacceptable. The premeditated use of old, misleading 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.

Key Negative/Leading Words:

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

- Illegal: 13%

---

- Rubbish: 12%
- Eviction: 6%
- Fear: 3%
- Anger: 3%
- Invasion: 1%

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:

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:

- Yes: 28%
- No: 38%
- Unsure [e.g. capitalised in some articles, not in others/used when ‘Gypsy’ or ‘Traveller’ was mentioned only once, at the start of a headline or sentence, therefore naturally capitalised]: 2%
- N/A [e.g. the paper has now gone into administration/been assimilated into another publication/family of publications/no articles since last audit]: 32%

In April 2011 only 2% of the publications in question capitalised ‘Gypsy’ and ‘Traveller’, in April 2012 this had increased to 4% and by April 2013 this has increased to 28%.

The number of publications not capitalising increased from 49% in 2011 to 54% in 2012, however, in 2013 the number of publications not capitalising has decreased to 38%, with those receiving mixed results decreasing from 20% in 2011 to 9% in 2012 and 2% in 2013. An increase in publications classed as ‘N/A’ rose from 27% in 2011 to 32% in 2012, remaining the same – 32% - in 2013.
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:

- ‘We’re all clapping our hands we’re so delighted. Hopefully this will keep these people out.’

Reader comments:

- ‘Since when have itinerants been a ‘race’? ’ – RCC, Birmingham, 04/04/2012 – rated 334 times at the time of auditing.
- ‘Your wrong, They SHOULD STOP BLOODY TRAVELLING!!!! Get a home and start paying Tax. I’m sick of the same story over and over and over. Travellers come, go and leave a massive mess behind them. The next time travellers arrive at a site, we should barricade them in with all our rubbish, so they have to stay there [sic].’ - dave.
- ‘hitler had the right idea and he will again! [sic]’ - Mac, 18/04/2012.
- ‘Why should sites be provided for these people. They contribute nothing to society and pay no taxes. If they wish to settle somewhere permanently then they should fund it themselves.’ - Richard.
- ‘Send them to Afganistan [sic]’ - Stop Your Tickling Jock.
- ‘Well they are violent nasty people that wouldn’t think twice about robbing you, your car, your house.’ – anetics.

____________________

8 The Northern Times, 07/03/2013, Landowner praised for move to keep travellers off beauty spot, on-line at: http://www.northern-times.co.uk/News/Landowner-praised-for-move-to-keep-travellers-off-beauty-spot-07032013.htm

9 Scottish Daily Mail [Online], 4/4/2012, Police investigate local newspaper over claims billboard poster about gypsy site ‘incited hatred’.

10 Evening Express, 11/01/2013, North-east MSP says Travellers should be integrated, not segregated.

11 Inverness Courier, 13/04/2012, New traveller site plans spark protests.

12 Inverness Courier, 08/06/2012, Plea for more travellers’ sites after camp moves from archive centre.

13 The Scottish Sun, 17/06/2012, Gypsy life doesn’t revolve around big, fat weddings.
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/question and answer 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 site terms and conditions, the removal process can take weeks - or in some cases the pages are not removed at all.

Nonetheless, far from being anonymous, it is relatively easy to trace someone’s real details on-line. Aberdeenshire last year saw two individuals charged for racially aggravated comments made on Facebook regarding Gypsy/Travellers. Anti-Traveller sentiment still exists on social networking sites, with groups such as No Bridge of Don Travellers Site without consultation [sic]14 being set up, and the Facebook presence of many local papers hosting inflammatory ‘debates’ concerning the Travelling community, resulting in comments such as the following: 'I [xxxxxxx] hate piki’es, it ain’t English, it ain’t Irish, it’s just ....Pikey!!! [sic]’ - Kenny Cathro.15

Article 12 in Scotland believe that social media – social networking sites, blogs, on-line news presences 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.

---

14 No Bridge of Don Travellers Site without consultation Facebook page. On-line at: https://www.facebook.com/pages/No-Bridge-of-Don-Travellers-site-without-consultation/148516211967042

15 Forfar Dispatch Facebook page, 07/09/2012, ‘As a group of Travellers move in on a site near Forfar, what are your views on the travelling community?’ On-line at: https://www.facebook.com/forfardispatch?ref=ts&fref=ts
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]**

- **Office of Communications [Ofcom]**
  Ofcom is a statutory body, and therefore has the backing of the law [guidelines can be found at]: [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/)


The **Equality and Human Rights Commission** also have a guide available for the media entitled Gypsy Travellers in Scotland: A Resource for The Media, which all journalists should make themselves familiar with before reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community: [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/Scotland/gypsy_travellers_in_scotland_-_a_resource_for_the_media__pdf_.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/Scotland/gypsy_travellers_in_scotland_-_a_resource_for_the_media__pdf_.pdf)

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 all 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.

**The Leveson Enquiry: Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press**

The **Leveson Enquiry** was set up by Prime Minister David Cameron in order to examine in-depth the culture, practice and ethics of the British press. It was a public, judge-led enquiry and was established as a result of the phone-hacking scandal caused by the now defunct News of the World. The Enquiry looked at the relationship between the press and the public, and also between the press and the police/politicians.

Lord Justice Leveson made several broad and complex recommendations relating to how the press is regulated, including:
• Newspapers should continue to be self-regulated - and the government should have no power over what they publish.
• There has to be a new press standards body created by the industry, with a new code of conduct.
• That body should be backed by legislation, which would create a means to ensure the regulation was independent and effective.
• The arrangement would provide the public with confidence that their complaints would be seriously dealt with - and ensure the press are protected from interference.\(^\text{16}\)

The current system, where the press is self-regulated voluntarily through the \textit{Press Complaints Commission}, is widely agreed to be failing - the \textit{PCC} itself has agreed to move into a transitional phase until a long-term replacement can be established. Publishing on the internet is not regulated as such; however, it is covered by laws on issues such as libel and contempt of court.

Although the \textit{Leveson Enquiry} has not dealt directly with the issues surrounding reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community, \textit{Article 12 in Scotland} feels that such an in-depth and public enquiry into the morals and ethics of the British media has in itself been a good thing. It is hoped that by shining the spot-light on unethical reporting, more journalists and editors will think about the dangerous repercussions of unbalanced journalism before publishing.

\textbf{Where Gypsy/Travellers Live: Equal Opportunities Committee Enquiry, March 2013}

This enquiry is a follow-up to recommendations produced by a previous \textit{Equal Opportunities Committee} concerning the lives of Gypsy/Travellers living in Scotland and how to improve them.

Under the discrimination section of the report, the \textit{Equal Opportunities Committee} stated the following concerning the media:

‘19. The media, including ‘new media’ such as blogs and comments boards, were cited in submissions as encouraging bad relations, primarily through the almost exclusively negative reporting of Gypsy/Traveller issue. There is an encouragement towards a ‘not-in-my-backyard’ attitude, and few examples of reporting from the Gypsy/Traveller perspective. Sections of the print media target criticism towards the planning for and establishment of private and public sites and place a focus on the notional impact on house prices. Witnesses from support services called for more stringent action on defamatory and racist reporting. Nigel Firth (NHS Grampian) suggested that negative reporting often left a ‘legacy’ of negative attitudes.'

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Press 'need to act' after Leveson}, 5/12/2012, on-line at: \url{http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-15686679}
20. The negative and unrepresentative television portrayal of Gypsy/Travellers, including the sexualisation of children in broadcast media and publicity for television shows, was described as having put back progress on tackling racism by 10 years. It is clear that this approach would not be taken using any other ethnic community.

Guidance for the media

21. The EHRC plans to revise its guide to the media in 2013. The previous guide was sent to 7000 media outlets in Scotland, and aimed to help illustrate some of the issues around Gypsy/Travellers and their interaction with the settled community in a non-legalistic way.  

Article 12 in Scotland welcomes this report and its findings. We reiterate our belief that the publication of the Where Gypsy/Travellers Live report has had a positive impact on reporting methods in Scotland. This, combined with awareness-raising campaigns such as our Young Gypsy/Travellers’ Lives project, has [this year at least] resulted in a decline in the negative reporting experienced by the Gypsy/Traveller community. There is still much work to be done however, but we hope to see this positive trend continuing over the remainder of our audit and beyond – eventually eliminating this unethical, unbalanced and dangerous method of reporting on an already marginalised ethnic minority.

____________________

Conclusions and recommendations

*Article 12 in Scotland* concludes that, once again, 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 [in particular with regards to local sites]; 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, the tide is slowly beginning to turn; change is starting to happen. Through awareness-raising campaigns such as our *Young Gypsy/Travellers Lives’* project, and high profile enquiries such as *Where Gypsy Travellers Live*, the plight of Gypsy/Travellers is gradually coming to the forefront. No longer a forgotten minority, the Gypsy/Traveller community is beginning to have its voice heard and given due regard. There is much work to be done, but *Article 12 in Scotland* believes that, with willing, the media can be instrumental in changing, rather than fuelling, negative attitudes towards the Gypsy/Traveller community - thus eradicating what many describe as the last ‘socially acceptable’ form of racism in Scotland.

**Recommendations:**

- Local authorities to push through the creation of 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.
- A continuation in the trend of more neutral and ethical reporting. *Article 12 in Scotland* would like to see Scottish publications taking a lead in this.
- All publications to familiarise themselves with the *Equal Opportunities Committee’s Enquiry Where Gypsy/Travellers Live* and the *Equality and Human Rights Commission’s guide: Gypsy Travellers in Scotland: A Resource for the Media*. *Article 12 in Scotland* would also like to see more self-regulation with regards to biased reporting on the Gypsy/Traveller community.
- 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.
- Publications to stop posting inflammatory ‘debates’ on their *Facebook* pages – these threads are instrumental in fuelling hatred and can lead to dangerous discussions.
- 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 racial profiling. Gypsy/Travellers should be treated with the respect due to any other ethnic minority.
Appendix: Visuals

1] Publications audited by Article 12 in Scotland:

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:

NB: Due to rounding up/down, and the overlapping of certain categories, some percentages may not add up to 100.

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

NB: Due to rounding up/down, and the overlapping of certain categories, some percentages may not add up to 100.

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

**Use of Stock Photograph**

- **Yes**: 18%
- **No**: 76%
- **Unsure**: 6%

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

NB: Due to rounding up/down, and the overlapping of certain categories, some percentages may not add up to 100.

Many articles contained more than one of the identified key negative/leading words.
6] Capitalisation of Gypsy/Traveller within audited articles:

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