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Women and Equalities Committee

Oral evidence: [Tackling inequalities faced by the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#) HC 360

Wednesday 11 July 2018

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 11 July 2018.

Members present: Mrs Maria Miller (Chair); Tonia Antoniazzi; Sarah Champion; Angela Crawley; Jess Phillips.

Questions 81–406

Witnesses

[I](#): Girl 1 and Girl 2. (Ages 14–16)

[II](#): Boy 1, Boy 2, Boy 3 and Boy 4. (Ages 11–13)

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Girl 1 and Girl 2.

Chair: Hi, Girl 1. Hello, Girl 2. We are really pleased to meet you and that you have come to our really weird place of work. This was built 200 years ago and it was not really built for these sorts of meetings. I am so sorry that it feels a bit formal but there is not a lot we can do about that. The good news is that we are just about to do a load of refurbishment to this place and try to make it bit easier to have more informal meetings. This was built by the Victorians and I do not think they were very good on informality.

It is really nice to meet you. My name is Maria and I will introduce you to all the people in the room. You know that we have this Committee in Parliament that looks at loads of issues to do with equality. We are all members of that Committee. I will first introduce you to the people who are the Members of Parliament and then the other people.

I am Maria and I represent a bit of Hampshire called Basingstoke.

Jess Phillips: I'm Jess and I represent a constituency in Birmingham.

Angela Crawley: I'm Angela and I represent a constituency called Lanark and Hamilton East, which is in Scotland.

Sarah Champion: Hello. I'm Sarah and I am Member of Parliament for Rotherham, which is in South Yorkshire.

Tonia Antoniazzi: I'm Tonia and the Member of Parliament for Gower, which is Swansea, South Wales. I used to be a teacher, so I can't wait to have a chat.

Chair: So, we come from all over the country. I will just explain who the other people are. This guy and that guy represent an organisation called *Hansard* and they take a note of all the things that we say, not so that anybody else can read it outside, but so that we do not have to take notes ourselves. Everything you say today will be private and you will not be able to be identified from what you say, but that is what they are up to.

That lady there, that lady there and that lady there are all people who help us because we have so much stuff on. The lady in white there is what we call a specialist adviser, so she actually knows what she is talking about on these issues; we generally don't.

I was just saying, in terms of what these guys do, that they take down a note of everything we do and the transcript will be published but it won't be identifiable with you. That is important.

Welcome to the other ladies there, whom you know but we don't. Thank you very much for making this possible today. We are really grateful to you for doing that.



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We are going to try to be as informal as we can be within this setting. We are going to ask a few questions and see where we get to. Sarah is going to start off, if that is okay. Brilliant.

- Q81 **Sarah Champion:** Thank you ever so much for coming in. What we are trying to do is understand more from your perspective about what works and what doesn't work. I have got the really stupid first question, so please forgive me—they will all do better than me. Would you describe yourselves as Gypsies, Travellers, or young women? What language should we use to talk? What are you most comfortable with?

Girl 1: I'll be most comfortable with Gypsy, just because I don't travel around, so I don't want to be pronounced as a Traveller.

Girl 2: I'd be more comfortable with being called a Gypsy.

- Q82 **Sarah Champion:** [Girl 2], I'm really interested that we've got little biogs of both of you. So, second stupid question: I'm too old to know how old [school year] makes you.

Girl 2: I've just turned [age].

- Q83 **Sarah Champion:** Just a baby.

From the Public Gallery: She won't like you saying that!

- Q84 **Sarah Champion:** I'll go and sit over there. I've just turned 49—that is the context that we need to see this in. It says in your biog that you want to be a [job]. What do you mean by that?

Girl 2: So, I've got my mum and I want to be like her. That might sound a bit clichéd, but I just think it's a really good thing to do. You're helping change people's lives; you're getting the message out there. And I think that's just really important.

- Q85 **Sarah Champion:** You are in a room full of powerful women activists, so we love the pair of you being here. Thank you very much for being here. And [Girl 1], you want to be a [job]?

Girl 1: Yeah, that's right.

- Q86 **Sarah Champion:** That's so cool. Why?

Girl 1: I've just been so interested watching [programme]

Sarah Champion: [programme] ?

Girl 1: From three years old. Things like that are just interesting. [description] I would obviously try and help the family.

- Q87 **Sarah Champion:** And what was it like in school, both primary and secondary, for both of you? Do you think that your school was helping you to reach your dreams? Did it give you the skills that you needed, because you're both quite clear about what you want to do?

Girl 1: I think primary school's very basic, so that just helps you learn to read and write, and all that. In secondary school, you're more



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independent. So from [school year] upwards, they helped me with getting where I need to be—what subjects I need to take to get there. Then, I want to go into sixth form, so they've helped me along that way, to get the A-levels that I want to get.

Q88 **Chair:** What A-levels do you want to get? I'm interested.

Girl 1: [subject], [subject] and [subject].

Q89 **Sarah Champion:** Perfect. And [Girl 2], what about you? Do you enjoy being at school? Personally, I hated being at school.

Girl 2: I don't think school's anyone's favourite thing to do.

Q90 **Sarah Champion:** You're meant to enjoy it. It's meant to be the best days of your life, which I never figured out.

Girl 2: No. My primary school was quite basic, as [Girl 1] said, but with secondary I find my school really supportive of what I do. So today they've given me absence. Then my teacher or my headmistress will come and talk to me, and say, "Oh, [Girl 2], what have you been doing?" It's quite interesting. Quite a lot of my teachers find it really interesting for me to do this. They take it as such a great opportunity.

Q91 **Sarah Champion:** And what about the students?

Girl 2: I think my friends will take the mick out of me a bit for it.

Q92 **Sarah Champion:** Why?

Girl 2: I don't know. I think they just think, "Oh, you're supposed to be in school. You're not supposed to be doing this stuff. You've only just turned [age]. It's a bit stupid you're doing this." And I'm like, "No it's not. This is what I want to do. I'm not going to let the school hold me back from what I want to do."

Q93 **Sarah Champion:** I'm interested, because a tiny part of me is Chinese, and I've always been really proud of that. When I went through school, we'd have Chinese new year celebrations, and this would be something I would tell people, because I'm really proud of my granny. You both say that you would identify as being Gypsies. So is that something that you would push at school? Do you have celebrations in school? Do you explain about your cultural heritage as well?

Girl 2: I have to push the school. When I went to Auschwitz I said, "I'm going to do a presentation on this. No one knows how many Roma died."

Sarah Champion: You're absolutely right.

Girl 2: Then they let me do that in the library. About half the school came, and it was really good. But other than that, they don't have any celebrations. So Gypsy Traveller history month—that's just gone in June—nobody knew about it, but we now know about all the other cultural celebrations.

Q94 **Chair:** Were the other kids in your school really surprised to hear about



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the story of Auschwitz and Travellers and Gypsies?

Girl 2: My teachers were really surprised, especially my history teacher.

Q95 **Sarah Champion:** You're joking?

Girl 2: I'm not joking. They literally came up to me and said, "Are you sure? Are you sure that this happened? Are you sure that half a million Gypsies died?" I'm like, "I'm 100% sure. I went there myself, and I saw the barracks they were in, with all their information." And they just didn't know what to do with that information.

Q96 **Chair:** It's interesting, isn't it? It's a bit of that story that's not told very much.

Girl 2: It is really interesting. More Jews died than we did, but in terms of the percentage, more of our ethnic minority died.

Q97 **Sarah Champion:** You're right. [Girl 1], what about you? Do you feel that your culture is celebrated and that people are proud of it, or does it go the other way?

Girl 1: I am very proud. In [school year], [teacher] looks after the children in our school. We had a woman who came in and we would design posters and stuff. We would have afternoon tea with her and tell her about our culture and stuff, but apart from that, we don't really.

Q98 **Sarah Champion:** I have to ask: what about other children? Would they single you out to celebrate or to pick on?

Girl 1: I don't know. They look at you differently.

Q99 **Sarah Champion:** In what way?

Girl 1: Obviously, I get along with non-Travellers. I am friends with some of them. But they would just, like, look at you. Some of them would not talk to you.

Q100 **Sarah Champion:** Seriously?

Girl 1: Yes. Also, when you go to get a job, you can barely apply for them. You can't even tell them you're a Gypsy, because you won't get the job.

Q101 **Sarah Champion:** Why do you think that?

Girl 1: My mum went through it. I just feel like we have to keep our identity from what we want to do.

Q102 **Sarah Champion:** I'm really sorry, and I'm really sorry, mum. Do you feel the same, [Girl 2]?

Girl 2: I definitely feel the same. People single you out for being a Gypsy. That is not in my case, or for my mum—my mum has worked for herself her whole life or for Gypsy and Traveller organisations. I do feel the same. I have heard so many cases of people. We have a voice, in a way. We have an accent, if that makes sense. If you call to get a job with that accent, they will say no. It has been proven. It is quite bad really.



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Sarah Champion: I'm really sorry to hear that.

Q103 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** How did your [exams] go, [Girl 1]?

Girl 1: It was quite hard, but I got through it. I tried my best, and that's all I can do.

Q104 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Well done. It is nerve-wracking, isn't it?

Girl 1: It is, very.

Q105 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** I absolutely feel your pain. I have only been a Member of Parliament for the past year, so I know exactly how you feel. My son is the same age as you, [Girl 2]. He is in [school year] and is going into [school year]. Have you started your GCSEs yet?

Girl 2: Yes, we have started some topics. I have picked my options at this point.

Q106 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** In school, what have your favourite subjects been?

Girl 1: I don't really like any subjects. I don't like school. It is a thing you have to go through.

Q107 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** I was a French teacher. I bet you loved that.
[Laughter.]

Girl 1: I think you have to get on with the teacher to like the subject more. I would say either science or maths.

Q108 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Well done. Those are two I hated at school. What about you, [Girl 2]?

Girl 2: I have got quite a few. I have got [language], which I really enjoy. One day I hope to become fluent in it.

Tonia Antoniazzi: Fab.

Girl 2: I like.[subject]. I really enjoy that. I am doing different projects, and I get really high grades. I really love history, because it has happened and it is history.

Q109 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** You like the sciences, [Girl 1], because obviously you want to go on to do [subject]. Is there anything you studied in school that you think was a complete waste of time or not of any use to you? You just do it because it is useful, and you have just got on and done it.

Girl 1: Yeah.

Q110 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** What about yourself?

Girl 2: Drawing an orange for five hours in art.

Q111 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Did you get the peel and the shading right?

Girl 2: I got a really bad grade for it, surprisingly. Algebra—I think you should learn it if it has got something to do with your job, but not at the



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moment. I cannot understand it. Maths and art are the most useless subjects, in my opinion.

- Q112 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** You made me laugh, because I quite liked art, but I was rubbish at maths. Is there anything that is not taught in school that would be really useful to you?

Girl 1: More life skills, because that teaches us to be independent. Say someone goes to college. They are on their own, and they have to learn how to deal with stuff on their own, whereas in sixth form you have still got all the teachers to help and support you there. So life skills would be useful.

- Q113 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Do you feel quite confident when you are filling out forms and things like that?

Girl 1: No.

- Q114 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** That would have been useful for you if you have to go to college. Okay, I understand that. Do the teachers treat you any different in school, [Girl 1]?

Girl 1: No. They just treat me like another student, as a non-Traveller.

- Q115 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Did you feel the same as everybody in your class? Did you feel that you were at the same academic standard in school?

Girl 1: Yes.

- Q116 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** You are achieving the same as everybody else, and you got on and carried on like that. Do you feel the same, [Girl 2]?

Girl 2: I feel the same. I think it depends with the teachers, and sometimes it can be influenced by where they are from, I find. My teacher, [Teacher], is Irish, and I'm not sure if it is because of that, but my sister is a really good student—she is one of the best students you will ever meet, with high grades and everything—and he somehow managed to send her out five times during one lesson. Then he started shouting so much that a teacher had to come up to me and hug me and say, "Are you all right? Are you okay?" My mum ended up having to talk to him about it.

- Q117 **Sarah Champion:** Do you think he is picking on you because you are a Gypsy?

Girl 2: I do, because all my other friends are settled. They all come up to me and are like, "He doesn't do that to me." There are two other Gypsy girls in our school, and they are like, "Yes, he shouts at me so much." I find that it is the Gypsies that he does it to quite often.

- Q118 **Chair:** [Girl 2], I met a group of Traveller girls recently, and they said they did not like school very much at all, so much so that they actually left school. How would you feel about that?

Girl 2: Many people do leave school at our age because of bullying, or because they find academics quite difficult. I wouldn't leave school personally, myself, because I want to do a career. It is quite hard to get a



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job without it. I do think that, in a way, it is their choice, but it might affect them in the future.

Q119 **Chair:** Some were saying that it was actually their parents' choice. Do you think that that is the case, or do you think it is more to do with the fact that they are not happy at school, or both?

Girl 2: I think it is both. My friend, who is an Irish Traveller, says, "My daddy don't want me to go to school. He don't want me hanging out with countrified people. He don't want me mixing with gorgers, in case I act like one."

Q120 **Jess Phillips:** Sorry, can you say those words again? What is a gorger?

Girl 2: Sorry. A gorger is a non-Traveller.

Q121 **Sarah Champion:** And you said "countrified?"

Girl 2: Yes. Irish Travellers, or sometimes Gypsies, say it. It is like, "You don't act like a Gypsy."

Q122 **Jess Phillips:** "You've changed the way that you are. You've assimilated with the culture."

Girl 2: Yes.

Q123 **Chair:** [Girl 1], how do you feel about people leaving school? What do you think about that?

Girl 1: I think it is to do with their parents, because, again, they don't want their children mixing with non-Travellers.

Q124 **Jess Phillips:** Why?

Girl 1: I don't know. Our ways are different to their ways, so a Traveller might get them mixed up with non-Traveller ways.

Q125 **Jess Phillips:** Like what?

Girl 1: Morals. We don't mix with others. Children will go out and hang around with boys—like, girls will hang around with boys. We don't do that. Girls will hang around with girls, and boys will go out with boys. We don't mix, but I don't really see anything—

Q126 **Jess Phillips:** Wrong with it?

Girl 1: Yeah. I get on with boys who are non-Travellers, and I get on with girls who are non-Travellers. But it's their choice in the end; if they want to come out of school, then it's their choice.

Q127 **Sarah Champion:** I am interested—nosy, to be quite honest. At what age would it be frowned on to be mixing with boys? Is it when you hit 16 that it's okay? Is it okay when you hit 18, or is it not okay until you get a proper boyfriend who your mum agrees with, or who your dad agrees with?

Girl 1: It is probably the age of 16, because Gypsies get married young, but my mum doesn't want me to get married young.



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Q128 **Chair:** Why does your mum not want you to get married young?

Girl 1: My mum wants me to focus on my career before I get married and have children and all that.

Q129 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** If you think about the best teacher you have ever had, how would you describe them, [Girl 1]?

Girl 1: What was that again?

Q130 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Who was your best teacher? You don't have to say the person's name. What makes a good teacher? When you think about that best teacher, that most inspirational one, what qualities do they have?

Girl 1: Someone who's there for you all the time. Someone you can talk to if you're getting picked on. Probably [teacher]. She's always there for me.

Jess Phillips: She's in the room.

Girl 1: Someone that listens to you. She works for my family. She's been working for my family since year 7. She's very supportive.

Q131 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** What about you, [Girl 2]? Who would your best teacher be?

Girl 2: Someone who is quite intelligent. I know they are teachers, but sometimes some of them don't have a clue about what they are saying to you. [Laughter.] Sometimes they will say stupid things about your culture. To me, they will say the stupidest things. Once I had a teacher that asked me whether they should call me a pikey or a Gypsy.

Q132 **Sarah Champion:** You are joking.

Girl 2: I'm not. I'm being really serious. The day before yesterday, I wasn't at school, and they started talking in [subject] about the word "pikey" and what it meant. My teacher claims she's a quarter Gypsy, and she didn't know what the word meant, so I was like, "Are you sure?" I said to my teacher, "Why didn't you just discuss it? I have no problem." And she was like, "Oh, I think some of the other classmates were scared that you would have a bit of a rant at them." If they don't know, they don't know. It's not my fault. It's the teacher's fault for not teaching them. My ideal teacher is someone who can make me laugh and who is there when I have a problem, and someone you can have a good conversation with.

Q133 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** [Girl 2], you were just saying about people having conversations in classrooms—in the [subject] lesson when you weren't there. Do those conversations go on when you are there? Do you have conversations about your Gypsy heritage with people in classes and with teachers quite openly?

Girl 2: Every day. I find that, often, teachers will come up to me and say, "Oh, so you're a Gypsy. Are you going to leave school?" My [subject] teacher actually asked me that in year 7. They said, "We've found out that you're a Gypsy, so does that mean you're going to leave school, because we can get you to do some other projects?"



Q134 **Sarah Champion:** How do you feel when someone says that?

Girl 2: I feel quite offended because it's a stereotype and it's not right that teachers think that. They should be educated. Luckily, my mum is quite a loud person like me, and she went into the school. She got all the teachers there, and her and a few other women then went and gave them some training about it, saying what they should call us and what happens if someone gets hit or someone has a fight over it.

Q135 **Chair:** [Girl 1], it's interesting to hear what [Girl 2] says about the attitudes of some teachers. Is that something you would recognise?

Girl 1: I think all the teachers understand in my school. If there is a problem, [teacher] will go and talk to them about it. She doesn't really like to get me mum involved. So they are quite understanding.

Q136 **Jess Phillips:** Do you ever get tired of having to explain it? We all have different identities and different things about us. When I was at school, I was essentially just a girl who was at school. I just wanted to be a girl who was at school. I didn't necessarily want to always have to be the thing that I am at home. You might just want to not talk about it. Do you ever get tired of it?

Girl 2: I do get tired, but at the end of the day it's spoken about and people need to know what's going on.

Q137 **Jess Phillips:** Do you feel the same?

Girl 1: Yeah, definitely.

Chair: [Girl 2], you talked about teachers singling people out because they were Gypsies. What do you think the school should do if that happens?

Girl 2: I think the school should talk to that teacher and say, "You can't do this," or maybe they should have more training. It is not right that teachers should be able to single you out, just because you are doing that. You are at school. You are with everyone else. You are not trying to be different; that is just what you are.

Q138 **Chair:** Do you think that sometimes, because of the way teachers react, it might almost encourage Gypsy children to think about leaving school early?

Girl 2: Definitely. You would not want to be singled out by a teacher. At the end of the day, they are there to teach you, not to single you out. You would be a bit like, "Why should I be in your class if you are going to do that to me?", wouldn't you?

Q139 **Chair:** How about you, [Girl 1]?

Girl 1: Yeah, I think it would change someone's mind about staying on at school, because they wouldn't want to be on their own at school; they would want to be with people who support them and help them.

Q140 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Where are you going on to do your A-levels, [Girl 1]? Will you be staying in the same school?



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Girl 1: Yes, in the same school for two years.

Q141 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** So you will be in that environment. Will that be the same case for you, [Girl 2]? Do you have A-levels there?

Girl 2: I don't really want to go to sixth form—I would prefer to go to college—but I listen to my mum.

Jess Phillips: I wish my kids were like that.

Girl 2: So I will definitely be going to the sixth form at my school, if my mum gets what she wants.

Q142 **Angela Crawley:** It is good that you have spoken about your experiences and those of your friends. Have you ever felt unsafe at school at any point? Have you ever felt like you were being bullied personally?

Girl 1: No. I have had a couple of arguments, but that is about it, and they have been dealt with straightaway.

Girl 2: I was bullied quite a lot throughout primary school. There was this girl and she was just nasty to me on a day-to-day basis. She would hit me and call me names.

Q143 **Angela Crawley:** Do you think that was because you were Gypsy?

Girl 2: No, it wasn't, to be fair. I think it was because I stole her best friend—as petty as that sounds.

Q144 **Angela Crawley:** Do you think people treat you differently? Have you ever felt a difference between people who are settled and people who identify as Gypsy?

Girl 1: Yes. In workplaces. School is not so bad, but definitely work. I think I will find it hard to get a job when I am older.

Q145 **Chair:** Can I just ask you a question, because I am finding this difficult? How would people know that you have a Gypsy heritage?

Girl 1: I don't really—

Chair: You say that you would find it difficult in work. I don't know where you live, so it is because—

Jess Phillips: You just sound like you are from down south to me.

Girl 1: I don't know. I think you might have to fill out some forms about what you are and stuff. In school, I think our parents have to write down what we are.

Jess Phillips: You don't have to fill them in. Just for the future: say you don't want to.

Girl 1: I think I will just put myself as—

Jess Phillips: No one is ever going to check. There are no blood tests.



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Angela Crawley: Equally, the point is that you should not have to do that in the first place, and that is more to the point. There is always that form at the end of an application that has diversity markers, and you can either tick the boxes or not, but you should not feel like you have to tick a different box, or equally, you should not feel ashamed if you do tick a different box. Your point about [job] and wanting to follow in your mum's footsteps is a good thing, because you should feel proud of where you come from and who you are—you should never feel ashamed of that. You are doing the right thing by—*[Interruption.]* It's my Scottishness, sorry. I have a different sense of pride altogether. As someone who has ticked various diversity boxes on a sheet, I always feel a bit aggrieved, because I think, "Why should I have to tick a different box from other people?" But thank you for coming in and telling us how you feel, because only by doing this can we start to change things and make it better.

Q146 **Jess Phillips:** You touched on issues around boys and girls already and whether they should mix or not. As young women, and, if I may say so, clearly quite bold young women who like speaking up about things, do you feel able to challenge some of the things in your own community that you might not like? Is there anything that you do not like?

Girl 2: Yes, definitely. For me, my mum is quite modern with it. She will say, "You can do what settled people do, as long as I know what you're doing at all times."

Jess Phillips: That is what settled people do as well, just FYI. I want to know where my kids are all the time.

Girl 2: Yeah. When my mum first found out I had a boyfriend, she was quite unhappy with me. She was like, "Oh, [Girl 2], I can't believe this. You never told me." I was like, "What do you want me to do?" At the end of the day, I think now she is a lot more accepting. Now she works with my ex's Mum and she has had the boy round at her house, so she has met him. I think they are just different things. I mix with boys quite a lot; I find them more interesting than girls. They are less dramatic.

Jess Phillips: That means they're less interesting. *[Laughter.]*

Girl 2: No.

Jess Phillips: You keep going.

Girl 2: You find out about the football from them. I don't watch it, but at least you can talk to them about it. I think I challenge a lot of stereotypes in my community: I am still at school; I do mix with boys.

Q147 **Jess Phillips:** Talking about the football, on this momentous day—I only watch football when it is the World cup—earlier you talked about countrified people, and [Girl 1] you said you like history, because this is England. Would you support England? Do you feel an English identity, or do you feel a Gypsy identity?

Girl 2: Yes.



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Girl 1: Yes.

Jess Phillips: And you would support England. Don't feel you have to tell me—if you want to support Croatia, that is your business.

Chair: Speaking with our Scottish and Welsh colleagues—

Jess Phillips: Yes, we understand that not everybody is rallying behind the flag. But you feel English as well?

Girl 2: Yes, we're still from England at the end of the day. We were born here.

Q148 **Jess Phillips:** Yes. I grew up in a place where lots of people—second generation usually—originate from Pakistan, and they are all supporting England, because they are British Pakistanis. I just wondered about your identity. You do feel that you can speak of the bad things that you are not so keen on. Do you both feel that you are able to try to modernise some of the things in your community?

Girl 1: Definitely, yes.

Girl 2: Yes.

Q149 **Jess Phillips:** You can speak openly and say it is all right for boys and girls to be friends with each other and things like that.

Girl 2: By being here today. Usually Gypsies wouldn't come here. They would say, "I'm not doing that. It is not going to help anything." Or they would say, "We are not going because it is up in London. What's the point?" This has challenged it in a way.

Sarah Champion: And you are rising to that challenge.

Q150 **Jess Phillips:** Do you think that people have a view—not just what is happening—that women and men are treated differently in your communities? And by your teachers? Because you were saying that the view is that if you are a Gypsy you are going to leave school.

Girl 1: Boys tend to leave school at a younger age than girls, mainly to go out to work with their dad. It teaches them lifestyle things—what they need to learn for when they are older—to be independent and work for themselves.

Q151 **Jess Phillips:** Do girls ever go out and work with their dads?

Girl 1: No.

Q152 **Jess Phillips:** Any reason why?

Girl 2: I don't know, but I think it is because of what the men think. Quite often, because of the stereotype, what happens in many situations is that the women stay at home—they clean, they look after the children, they cook a meal for their husband. The man goes out and works and gets the money.



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Q153 **Jess Phillips:** What do you think about that?

Girl 2: I think that is really stupid.

Q154 **Jess Phillips:** I didn't want to put words in your mouth, [Girl 2], but I also think that is really stupid. [Girl 1] what do you think?

Girl 1: I think it's stupid as well. I think both parents, even girls, should be allowed to go out to work and be independent. That is what I want to do. I don't want to depend on a man for bringing money in. I want to bring money in too.

Q155 **Jess Phillips:** And what about men doing housework?

Girl 1: I don't know. *[Laughter.]*

Chair: We all laugh at that point.

Jess Phillips: I don't. My husband does all the cooking and cleaning in my house. He picks up my—his—children from school every single day and takes them to school. I don't know where the dustpan and brush is in my house. I am not sure how to take the bins out.

Q156 **Chair:** [Girl 2], going back to what you said about stereotypes, I understand exactly what you mean. You call it a stereotype, but it is a way of life for a lot of Gypsy girls. How do you feel about that?

Girl 2: At the end of the day, the stereotype of that happening is becoming more and more common, because they are thinking, "I want to be like the other Gypsies. I don't want to become like this. I want to stick to my culture, my ways. I don't want to not." I do think that, at the end of the day, no one is holding a gun to their heads to do it.

Q157 **Chair:** Why do you think they want to do it?

Girl 2: So that they can stick to their culture. They can be one of them in a way.

Chair: So it is part of their aspiration.

Q158 **Jess Phillips:** If a young woman were to say, "I don't want to do this and I'm going off to university"—you have both talked about the things you want to do—and "I'm going to have a different way of life", do you feel that you would be accepted?

Girl 2: It depends on who you are talking to. Quite often, some Gypsy and Traveller families are quite old-fashioned and think, "No, you shouldn't be going to school. What are you? An idiot? You shouldn't be doing it!" It depends on the people and how traditional they are.

Q159 **Jess Phillips:** Where you live, do you feel like everyone would be fine if you went to university?

Girl 2: Yeah, and if they're not, that's their loss. They are losing me.

Q160 **Jess Phillips:** [Girl 2], I don't feel that you will ever let anyone tell you what to do in your life, ever. That is admirable. What about you, Girl 1?



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Do you think you will be fine if you go off to university?

Girl 1: Yeah, I think I will be fine. A lot of the Traveller and Gypsy ways—the old ways—are dying out a bit, so the modern ways are coming in. I think you will be all right. I think some girls, when we get older, will be working and going to university, because it will have changed.

Q161 **Sarah Champion:** Do you think your mums will get pressure if you both go to university, get jobs and maybe do not marry until you are 30, or not at all? Do you worry about the pressure your parents might face if you do that?

Girl 1: No, I don't. My mum wants me to go out and is pushing me to go and get a life for myself, so I can be independent and work.

Q162 **Sarah Champion:** Do you think it is a consideration for other Gypsy children?

Girl 1: Yeah, definitely, because the industry out there is getting really hard to go into, so you will have to have GCSEs and A-levels and something to back you up in the future.

Girl 2: I don't think anyone will try to challenge my mum on it. My mum would just say, "She's my daughter and she can do what she wants, and I'll let her do it. If that's what she really wants, she's going to do it."

Q163 **Jess Phillips:** What about boys, if they want to stay on at school? You both said that it is actually much more likely that boys leave school, which is interesting. What if the boys said, "Actually, I really want to be an astrophysicist, so I'm going to have to stay and do my A-levels"?

Girl 2: I think that would be frowned upon quite a lot, because they are not going out and getting money, but that is their choice. At the end of the day, if they want to do it, they are going to do it. No one will stop you.

Girl 1: Yeah, no one will stop them. They will do what they are going to do. If you have a straight mind, you are going to follow that.

Q164 **Jess Phillips:** Do you feel that every Gypsy boy feels that they could do that? It is not about whether an individual could be strong—you are both obviously very strong—but if you grow up always being told that you should not carry on in education, you are much less likely to, because you want to be like your culture, as you have already said. Do you think that there is enough encouragement for boys to stay at school?

Girl 1: No, there's not. As has already been said, they are pushed to go on with their culture, so they are more likely not to carry on with what they actually want to do.

Q165 **Sarah Champion:** Is part of the culture having girlfriends rather than boyfriends for boys?

Girl 1: Yeah.

Sarah Champion: Both of you went tight-lipped when I asked that question.



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Jess Phillips: Not modernised that much, then.

Q166 **Chair:** It's interesting, [Girl 2], that you said your mum said, "As long as you tell me about everything you're doing." As Jess rightly said, all of us mums want to know everything our children are doing, but are there things that you would not talk to your mum about?

Jess Phillips: You might not want to talk to us about them either.

Girl 2: I trust my mum implicitly—*[Interruption.]*

Sarah Champion: [Girl 2] is going red.

Chair: The answer is obviously yes, there will be some things. *[Interruption.]* No helping from the audience, please.

Sarah Champion: That was my fault. Sorry.

Girl 2: There are definitely some things that I would not talk to my mum about. My mum is quite a loud person and she would tell everyone. She would post it on Facebook, at the end of the day.

Jess Phillips: Your mum sounds ace.

Girl 2: My mum's very loud. There are some things that I would trust her with. At the end of the day, she's the only parent I've got. She's my mum, so I've got to tell her. Otherwise, who else am I going to tell? She's the only person I've got.

Q167 **Chair:** Some other Traveller girls I met in another part of the country were telling me about how they, like you, want to have jobs and careers, and at school they also want to learn about relationships and things like that. Is that something you would talk to your mum about?

Girl 2: I've been forced to talk to my mum. She works with my ex's mother. My mum had a very long conversation about our relationship in the [location]. They all started asking.

Q168 **Sarah Champion:** Was he older?

Girl 2: No, he was my age.

Q169 **Jess Phillips:** Why were you in a [location]?

Girl 2: It was my mum in the [location]. She works with them. I've never been in a [location]—don't worry. Usually, I talk to my mum about relationships. If I have a question about what is going on with it or if I am not sure, again, I'll talk to her.

Girl 1: I talk to my mum about everything.

Q170 **Jess Phillips:** What about school? Lots of us around this table think we should talk to young people much more about healthy relationships in school. I used to run a women's refuge for victims of domestic abuse, and I am always trying to make it so that young people feel they have someone to talk to at school if they are in difficult relationships, if they



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don't feel safe or if they don't feel they can talk to their parents because they are suffering at home. Do you feel that school is a place where you can talk about those sorts of things?

Girl 1: I feel school is a place where we can talk about those things. We have school counsellors we can go to, but personally I would want to go to my parents.

Q171 **Jess Phillips:** Yes. If you can, that's obviously the preferable option. At school, did you have any classes that your parents didn't want you to go to?

Girl 1: Yes. I'd rather not say what it is.

Jess Phillips: Fair enough. You don't need to say.

Girl 2: At school, when they are doing those subjects—when the teachers start talking about it and saying, "Do that subject"—I go to the library. I still learn it, but I don't think it should be done with a classroom full of boys and girls mixed. I don't think that's right. No matter the age, I don't think it's right. I think you should learn about it separately. They make a bit of a joke about it. Traveller boys are going to make a joke out of it.

Jess Phillips: I don't disagree with you.

Chair: Thank you so much for coming along today. It really has been brilliant to hear your views and to be able to ask you these questions. You are both such talented young women.

Jess Phillips: I feel hopeful for you.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Boy 1, Boy 2, Boy 3 and Boy 4.

Q172 **Chair:** Grab a seat. Does everyone have a seat? Could I ask that mums, dads, aunts, uncles and carers are sitting in the back row? There we are. Great. Lovely. Right, who's [Boy 3]?

Boy 3: Me.

Q173 **Chair:** There we are. That's yours. Who's [Boy 2]?

Boy 2: Me.

Q174 **Chair:** There we go. And you are?

Boy 4: [Boy 4].

Chair: You are [Boy 4]. Brilliant. It's lovely to meet you all. Shall we all introduce ourselves to you? I'm Maria. Do you know what? I have two boys. One is called Jack and one is called James. This lady has got two boys. We are going to have one conversation, yes? Brilliant.



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I am Maria. I am from Basingstoke and I am a Member of Parliament.

Jess Phillips: I am Jess, and I'm from Birmingham.

Sarah Champion: What Maria is saying is she is the gaffer, and be scared. That is basically where she is coming from! I am scared. I am Sarah and I am a Member of Parliament from Rotherham, which is in South Yorkshire.

Tonia Antoniazzi: I am Tonia. I am the MP for Gower, which is in Swansea. I used to be a teacher last year, so it's quite funny really.

Q175 **Chair:** There are lots of other people in the room. Would it be useful to know who the other people in the room are?

Boy 3: Yes, go on.

Chair: [Introductions] All these people work with me to help make sure that we keep good records of what we are doing. These two people—I don't know their names—help us write up our report, so that we have a good idea of what is being said.

The most important thing is that we can hear what you are saying. What I would ask is that one person speak at a time, because otherwise we will miss what you are saying, and it won't go down in the record. If we don't know what you're saying, that's a bit of a shame, isn't it? Will you promise me that you will just speak one at a time?

Boy 3: Yes.

Chair: Brilliant. [Boy 4], one at a time?

Boy 4: Yes.

Chair: [Boy 1], one at a time?

Boy 1: Yes.

Chair: Great, because I think you have got lots to tell us.

Boy 3: We haven't got a lot, to tell you the truth.

Chair: We don't want to miss anything. Sarah, are you going to start?

Q176 **Sarah Champion:** I get to go first. Thank you for coming. What we are trying to do is find out what it is like to be in your shoes and how we can make school better, if not for you, then for other children. We really want to learn from you, if that's okay? Can I start by asking really stupid questions first? I am not saying this to be offensive, but because I do not know the answers. Would you describe yourselves as Gypsies, as Travellers—what language would you use?

Boy 3: Travellers.

Q177 **Sarah Champion:** What's the difference between Gypsies and Travellers?



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Boy 3: Nothing really, we just don't like it.

Q178 **Sarah Champion:** That's really interesting, because the girls were in here and they wanted us to call them Gypsies.

Boy 3: Yeah?

Sarah Champion: Yeah.

Q179 **Chair:** [Boy 4], do you agree with that?

Boy 4: Yeah. Are they English?

Sarah Champion: Yeah.

Boy 4: That's probably why.

Q180 **Sarah Champion:** You're all from Irish backgrounds?

Boy 3: [Boy 1] is English.

Boy 4: I'm half and half. Irish people want to be called Travellers and English people want to be called Gypsies.

Q181 **Sarah Champion:** Is it where you are born, or is it what your parents—

Boy 3: It is parents.

Q182 **Sarah Champion:** Were you all born in England?

Boy 3: I was born in England.

Boy 4: I was born in Ireland, and I am Irish.

Q183 **Chair:** You are supporting England in the football?

Boy 3: Yes.

Q184 **Chair:** Boy 4, are you supporting England?

Boy 4: Yes.

Q185 **Chair:** Boy 2, are you supporting England?

Boy 2: No, I'm going for Croatia.

Boy 3: Croatia are going to lose.

Q186 **Sarah Champion:** [Boy 2], I just want to say something to you, because I am dyslexic as well. When I was going through school, I just thought I was thick and the teachers thought I was thick. It was only when I got to about 26 that I realised I was dyslexic and I see the world differently. It is really cool being dyslexic, because we do have a different view of stuff. Are all of you still in school?

Boy 3: No. Only him.

Q187 **Sarah Champion:** You're the only one? Why is it that each of you has left school?



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Boy 3: We are all different. I don't like school. He likes it.

Q188 **Sarah Champion:** Why didn't you like it?

Boy 3: I don't know. I just didn't like it. It was boring.

Q189 **Sarah Champion:** I hated school, but I still stuck through it.

Boy 3: No, I done the primary school and that was it.

Boy 1: I only wanted to do to year 6—

Chair: One voice at a time.

Boy 1: I would do year 6, but I didn't want to do secondary.

Q190 **Sarah Champion:** Why?

Boy 1: I was used to primary. I didn't want to go up to secondary.

Q191 **Sarah Champion:** Did you enjoy primary?

Boy 1: Yeah, it was all right.

Q192 **Sarah Champion:** So why not secondary? It might have been even better.

Boy 4: Secondary is harder.

Q193 **Sarah Champion:** Really?

Boy 4: No, I just didn't want to go.

Q194 **Sarah Champion:** But you're all bright boys. [Boy 2], how come you stayed into secondary?

Boy 2: Um—

Boy 3: All his friends went.

Chair: One voice.

Boy 2: Yeah, let me talk. All my mates went there, so I went there, but it was a big mistake.

Q195 **Sarah Champion:** Why?

Boy 2: Don't know.

Q196 **Sarah Champion:** Go on, you do know.

Boy 2: I didn't really like it. I thought it was going to be more fun, but it isn't really.

Q197 **Sarah Champion:** Did you get any encouragement from your teachers to stay on?

Boy 2: No.

Q198 **Sarah Champion:** No? Serious?



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Boy 2: Yes.

Q199 **Sarah Champion:** But isn't that their job?

Boy 2: No, none of them helped me.

Q200 **Sarah Champion:** Do you think that is anything to do with you being Travellers, or do you think they were like that for any child?

Boy 4: They were like that for any child. *[Interruption.]*

Boy 3: One voice, one voice.

Q201 **Sarah Champion:** [Boy 3], your voice. Do you think there was any difference because you are a Traveller with the way that teachers treated you?

Boy 3: Not really, but some teachers do treat you differently to all the others. I don't know why.

Q202 **Chair:** In what way?

Boy 3: I don't know. They just don't help you as much as others.

Q203 **Jess Phillips:** Is that because they think you might leave school?

Boy 3: Yes. They're probably not bothered about you, because they know you're going to probably leave.

Q204 **Sarah Champion:** [Boy 1], do you think the same?

Boy 1: Yes.

Q205 **Sarah Champion:** What do you miss about not being in school? Anything?

Boy 1: Nothing really.

Q206 **Chair:** But you liked being in primary school, [Boy 1]?

Boy 1: Yeah, that was all right.

Q207 **Sarah Champion:** A couple of you, your grannies teach you? Is that right?

Boy 3: Yeah, mine.

Q208 **Sarah Champion:** Is that better?

Boy 3: Yeah, because she understands you more. Teachers don't.

Q209 **Sarah Champion:** Is she strict? What does she teach you?

Boy 3: Anything really. It is up to her: spelling, maths—anything.

Boy 1: Sometimes I get tutoring.

Q210 **Sarah Champion:** From who?



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Boy 1: I think his name was [tutor]. Was it? [tutor]—that's his name. I used to get home tutored.

Q211 **Sarah Champion:** How was that?

Boy 1: Good. I liked it.

Q212 **Sarah Champion:** Don't you miss your friends?

Boy 1: Most of my friends were Travellers.

Q213 **Chair:** Do you get home tutoring now?

Boy 1: Yeah.

Q214 **Chair:** From [tutor]?

Boy 1: Yeah.

Q215 **Chair:** What sort of things do you do in your home tutoring?

Boy 1: Reading, maths and English.

Q216 **Sarah Champion:** Do any of you have younger brothers and sisters?

Boy 3: He's my younger brother.

Q217 **Sarah Champion:** That's why you're picking on him—now it all makes sense. That's really interesting that you stayed at school, but you left.

Boy 3: Yeah, I didn't like it. I wanted to stay with my grandad, working.

Q218 **Sarah Champion:** Did you encourage [Boy 2] to stay at school?

Boy 3: No.

Q219 **Sarah Champion:** Did you encourage him to leave school?

Boy 3: Yeah. I didn't want him to go.

Q220 **Sarah Champion:** Was that pressure for you, [Boy 2]?

Boy 2: No.

Q221 **Sarah Champion:** But he's your big brother—don't you want to follow what your big brother has done?

Jess Phillips: Jesus, I wouldn't follow mine.

Boy 2: I wouldn't blame you.

Boy 3: We're all different.

Q222 **Sarah Champion:** What did your parents think? Would they have rather you stayed at school?

Boy 3: I think they probably would, but I didn't want to, to be honest.

Q223 **Sarah Champion:** How come you are working with your grandpa rather than your dad?



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Boy 3: Because I like it more.

Q224 **Chair:** So what sort of things do you do, [Boy 3]?

Boy 3: We work up here sometimes, cleaning driveways and stuff.

Sarah Champion: Hard work?

Boy 3: Yeah. It's all right.

Sarah Champion: Nice to get some money, though?

Boy 3: Yeah.

Q225 **Sarah Champion:** [Boy 4], what about you? What sort of work do you do?

Boy 4: I don't go to work.

Q226 **Sarah Champion:** Would you want to?

Boy 4: I would. I would like to do jet washing, but I might get blown away.

Q227 **Sarah Champion:** Do you do home schooling?

Boy 4: No, I don't.

Q228 **Sarah Champion:** Are you not bored?

Boy 4: Sometimes, yeah.

Q229 **Sarah Champion:** Why not go back to school?

Boy 3: Because he is always moving.

Chair: Hold on, [Boy 3].

Jess Phillips: Let him answer, [Boy 3].

Q230 **Sarah Champion:** Is that true?

Boy 4: Yes, I'm always moving everywhere. In a month now, I'll be leaving here.

Q231 **Sarah Champion:** Doesn't that make you anxious?

Boy 4: No.

Q232 **Sarah Champion:** That's just normal? But it must make it hard to get friends?

Boy 4: Yeah, sometimes. When I first came here, I didn't want to go here. I wanted to stay at my old place.

Q233 **Sarah Champion:** I can understand that. But does it make it difficult to fit in?

Boy 4: Yeah.



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Q234 **Jess Phillips:** How regularly do you move, then?

Boy 4: I don't know really.

Q235 **Jess Phillips:** How long do you normally stay somewhere?

Boy 4: About two month.

Q236 **Sarah Champion:** Are your parents moving for work each time?

Boy 4: Yeah.

Q237 **Jess Phillips:** What about the rest of you—do you move about?

Boy 3: No, we're permanent.

Q238 **Jess Phillips:** What about you, [Boy 1]?

Boy 1: Permanent.

Boy 3: We live right next to each other.

Q239 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** You know each other, then. Do you knock around together, cause trouble do you?

Boy 1: No, we play football.

Q240 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Do you spend a lot of time together?

Boy 3: No, just play Fortnite.

Tonia Antoniazzi: Like my 14-year-old son.

Jess Phillips: Mine play it all the time.

Q241 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Is it any good?

Boy 1: Yeah, you should have a go.

Q242 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Do you play that FIFA game?

Boy 4: Yeah, I do.

Q243 **Jess Phillips:** Do you have any friends who aren't Travellers?

Boy 3: Yeah, loads.

Q244 **Jess Phillips:** Where did you meet them?

Boy 3: School.

Q245 **Jess Phillips:** Do you remain friends with them?

Boy 3: Yeah, for ages.

Boy 4: On "Fortnite"—the game.

Q246 **Jess Phillips:** That's interesting. My son has friends on "Fortnite" who I will never meet and who I hope aren't weirdos on the internet. So you have stayed friends through "Fortnite". Do you ever have people over?

Boy 3: No.



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Q247 **Jess Phillips:** Your mates don't come over to the site. My house is literally always full of teenage kids. Do you ever go over to people's houses?

Boy 3: Sometimes, yeah.

Jess Phillips: Non-Travellers?

Q248 **Sarah Champion:** Why don't your friends come to you?

Boy 3: I don't really ask.

Q249 **Sarah Champion:** [Boy 2], why don't your friends come over to your house?

Boy 2: I don't know. They are quite scared.

Q250 **Sarah Champion:** Of what?

Boy 2: Of dogs.

Sarah Champion: I like dogs.

Boy 2: They don't like the dogs on the site.

Q251 **Jess Phillips:** What is wrong with the dogs on the site?

Boy 4: They think the dogs are vicious, but they aren't.

Q252 **Jess Phillips:** They are vicious?

Boy 4: No.

Q253 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** They just bark a lot and it scares people, doesn't it?

Boy 4: Yes.

Q254 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** They are actually quite nice. Can I ask you a question, boys? [Interruption] I will start with you, Boy 4. When you went to school, did you like it?

Boy 4: Yes.

Q255 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** What was the best thing about it?

Boy 4: Nothing.

Q256 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Was there one thing you liked? What was the best thing? If there was one thing you liked, what was it?

Boy 4: [subject]—that's it.

Tonia Antoniazzi: [subject], right.

Boy 4: [subject] and [subject].

Q257 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** What was the worst thing?

Boy 4: Getting shouted at.



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Q258 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** [Boy 2], what's the best thing about school?

Boy 2: Going home.

Q259 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Any lessons? Any teachers?

Boy 2: No.

Q260 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** What is the worst thing?

Boy 2: Probably going to school.

Q261 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Is there anything that you like about it, [Boy 2]?

Boy 2: I only like the teachers.

Q262 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Are all the teachers nice to you?

Boy 2: No, I only like my [subject] teacher.

Q263 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** What is so great about your [subject] teacher?

Boy 2: I don't know.

Q264 **Jess Phillips:** Is she nice to you?

Boy 2: Yeah.

Q265 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** [Boy 3], when you went to school, what was the best thing about it?

Boy 3: Friends—that was about it.

Q266 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** What was the worst thing about it?

Boy 3: I don't know. In the morning.

Q267 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** In the morning, getting up?

Boy 3: Yes.

Q268 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** I have terrible trouble getting in here for half-past 9, and that's not early. [Boy 1], what about you? What was the best thing about school?

Boy 1: Going home.

Tonia Antoniazzi: Anything—teachers, lessons?

Q269 **Jess Phillips:** Do you worry about what you are going to do in the future if you can't read or—?

Boy 3: No. I can read.

Q270 **Jess Phillips:** What about if you don't extend your education? What do you all want to be when you grow up?

Boy 3: Work with my dad.

Boy 4: When I come back, I'll jet wash something.



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Q271 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Do you know what I thought was quite interesting, [Boy 4]? There were two things. One thing I think is really interesting is that [Boy 4] said that he liked sport. One of the famous Welsh rugby international players—

Boy 2: I play rugby.

Q272 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Do you play rugby? Brilliant. I used to play rugby for Wales—a long time ago, before you were born—but one of our most famous rugby players in Wales is a guy called Samson Lee. He is a Traveller, and he is from Llanelli, which is where I am originally from.

Boy 1: One of the famous Welsh players is Ryan Giggs.

Q273 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Yes, he plays football, but you like rugby, [Boy 2]. Do you like rugby, [Boy 4]?

Boy 4: Yeah, I love rugby.

Q274 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Do you know what I noticed, [Boy 3]? What you said was you liked working with your granddad, and you said, [Boy 4], about power washing. The work that you do is really physical, isn't it?

Boy 3: Yeah, I keep fit doing that.

Q275 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** You need to keep fit. Is there any way that you would like to be doing more sport? Do you get the chance?

Boy 3: I do boxing.

Boy 1: I do football.

Q276 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** You do football? Are you in a club?

Boy 1: Yes.

Boy 3: I do boxing.

Q277 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Brilliant. You do boxing. [Boy 2], what do you do?

Boy 2: Rugby, and I play "Fortnite."

Q278 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Well, "Fortnite" is not going to be very physical, is it?

Boy 2: It is. It works my fingers.

Tonia Antoniazzi: It works your fingers.

Boy 4: Miss, is ping-pong one?

Tonia Antoniazzi: Table tennis, yes—ping-pong.

Boy 4: I like ping-pong.

Q279 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** [Boy 3], how does sport make you feel? When you are boxing, does it make you feel confident?

Boy 3: Yes.



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Q280 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Do you find it de-stresses you and makes you feel happier?

Boy 3: You feel good.

Tonia Antoniazzi: You get a good feeling.

Boy 3: It lets you stretch out.

Q281 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Brilliant. How many times a week do you do sport?

Boy 3: Three times a week.

Q282 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Brilliant. How many times do you play football?

Boy 4: I go once a week, every Saturday.

Q283 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Excellent. What about you, [Boy 2]? Are you in a rugby club, or do you just do it in school?

Boy 2: I quit it.

Tonia Antoniazzi: You quit it, but you do PE.

Q284 **Chair:** Are you sad about that, [Boy 2]?

Boy 2: Yeah.

Q285 **Sarah Champion:** But they would have you back?

Boy 2: No, they don't.

Q286 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** When you were in school, did you ever have a Gypsy and Roma Traveller month? Did you ever do anything like that to celebrate your culture?

Boy 1: Only one time. I only learned about it in [year].

Q287 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** In [year]. You remember that. [Boy 2], no. [Boy 4]? When you have been in different schools, have you ever celebrated?

Boy 4: I did it once when I was in [year].

Q288 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Okay, that's cool. [Boy 1], you said that you have tutoring and that you work with your dad in [place], do you?

Boy 1: No, he quit that and now we're in [occupation].

Q289 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** So do you go and help him out with the [occupation]?

Boy 1: Sometimes.

Q290 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Sometimes you do, yeah?

Boy 1: Yeah.

Q291 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** And do you enjoy it?

Boy 1: Yeah.

Q292 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** I was just wondering, if you were in the [place], would you be using your adding up skills and things like that that you might have learned from your home tutor?



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Boy 1: No, I only—

Boy 3: He used to sell [items].

Boy 1: I only got the stuff out.

Q293 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** So you just did all the physical work.

Boy 1: I got the stuff out—and he did the selling.

Q294 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** You did all the hard work.

Boy 1: Yeah.

Q295 **Sarah Champion:** Is there anything that school taught you that will help you in your adult life?

Boy 3: No. Probably only about earning enough money—that's about it.

Boy 1: School taught me nothing. The only person who taught me really was the tutor.

Q296 **Sarah Champion:** What do you think it should have taught you? What skills would have helped you? You said adding up.

Boy 3: Yeah, that was about it. And taking away. That was about it. Maths was the only thing.

Q297 **Sarah Champion:** [Boy 1]?

Boy 1: I was all right at maths and stuff.

Q298 **Sarah Champion:** Do you think that that will help you?

Boy 1: Yeah.

Q299 **Sarah Champion:** What about other skills? Anything?

Boy 1: No. Just maths.

Boy 3: Probably reading. Reading and writing.

Boy 2: My school is just the worst.

Q300 **Chair:** You have all been at school. Did you always feel safe at school?

Boy 2: No.

Boy 3: Sometimes, yeah.

Q301 **Chair:** Boy 2, you said no. Why did you say no?

Boy 2: Because if a bomb fell, where would you go?

Chair: That's unlikely, isn't it?

Q302 **Jess Phillips:** Did you get picked on because of your heritage?

Boy 3: No, I was always there for him.

Q303 **Jess Phillips:** But did you ever get picked on?

Boy 3: Never.

Q304 **Jess Phillips:** [Boy 1]?

Boy 1: No.



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Q305 **Jess Phillips:** [Boy 4]?

Boy 4: In [year]—

Q306 **Sarah Champion:** I'm a bit deaf. I literally can't hear if you don't speak up.

Boy 4: There were three young fellas and we were playing football and by accident I tripped one up. They all started ganging up on me, so I ran for my life. They kept chasing me, so I kept throwing the football back at them.

Q307 **Jess Phillips:** Did anybody ever pick on you because you are Travellers?

Boy 4: No.

Q308 **Sarah Champion:** I find that hard to believe, because I remember when I was at school and if anything made you different—if you wore glasses or if you came from a different housing estate—you would get picked on.

Boy 3: I've probably been called "pikey" a few times.

Q309 **Sarah Champion:** That's just rude. Do they do it to get a rise out of you—to bait you?

Boy 3: Yeah.

Q310 **Sarah Champion:** And do you feel that you shouldn't—

Boy 3: I just don't react, to be honest.

Sarah Champion: You're the bigger person for doing that.

Q311 **Jess Phillips:** Do any of you have dreams of what you might want to be in the future?

Boy 4: No, I never get dreams.

Jess Phillips: I don't mean literally.

Q312 **Chair:** Let's hear from [Boy 2]. What do you want to be when you grow up?

Boy 2: Don't know.

Q313 **Chair:** What about you, Boy 4? What do you want to do when you're older?

Boy 4: Jet washing.

Q314 **Sarah Champion:** Do you want your own jet-washing business or do you want to work for someone else?

Boy 4: I want to work for me.

Q315 **Sarah Champion:** You want people to work for you.

Boy 4: Yeah.

Q316 **Chair:** What about you, Boy 1? What do you think you should do when you're a bit older?

Boy 1: Dunno. Football and builder.



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Q317 **Jess Phillips:** And what about you, [Boy 3]?

Boy 3: No, I have no dream.

Q318 **Jess Phillips:** You don't want to be anything when you grow up?

Boy 2: I know my dream.

Q319 **Chair:** What's that, [Boy 2]?

Boy 2: I'm living through it.

Q320 **Jess Phillips:** The people who made "Fortnite" made an absolute killing. They're computer programmers and they are very rich now. Would any of you like to make computer games?

Boy 3: Me.

Q321 **Sarah Champion:** This is a question to [Boy 3] and [Boy 1]. , because you two are the oldest here. Is one of your dreams to get married and have children yourselves

Boy 3: Probably, yeah, but that's not a dream.

Q322 **Sarah Champion:** Why?

Boy 3: That's going to happen. It's not going to be a dream.

Q323 **Jess Phillips:** How do you know?

Boy 3: Because I know I'm going to get married someday.

Sarah Champion: But then that is something that you're dreaming for—looking forward to, then. That's something that you want.

Q324 **Jess Phillips:** When you're married, would you want your wife to have a job as well?

Boy 3: No.

Q325 **Jess Phillips:** Why's that?

Boy 3: Because I work and I put food on the table; she just cleans.

Q326 **Jess Phillips:** Two people can work. You'd be richer if you both worked.

Boy 1: But who's going to look after the kids?

Q327 **Jess Phillips:** Nursery?

Boy 3: Nursery? No.

Q328 **Jess Phillips:** Why are you frowning? It could be your granny, or the grandparents of the children. Why can't they help?

Boy 1: Because they're dead!

Q329 **Jess Phillips:** Your grandparents look after you.

Boy 3: True.



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Boy 1: Sometimes.

Q330 **Jess Phillips:** So you don't think women should work? You think that they should just have children?

Boy 3: Especially a Travelling woman.

Boy 1: Yeah, and clean up—

Q331 **Jess Phillips:** Why especially not Traveller women?

Boy 3: Because, like, obviously you all have jobs and you have children at home, but I don't think they should, because there should be only one working. You don't need money to have happiness, do you?

Q332 **Jess Phillips:** No, but maybe freedom?

Boy 3: It doesn't matter how much money you need.

Q333 **Jess Phillips:** What if she wanted to?

Boy 3: If she wanted to work, that's her own—

Q334 **Jess Phillips:** So you wouldn't mind?

Boy 3: Yeah, I wouldn't mind, but if she doesn't want to work, she doesn't have to.

Q335 **Chair:** What do you think about girls going to secondary school? You decided not to.

Boy 3: Yeah, I decided not to go.

Q336 **Chair:** What do you think about girls going to secondary school?

Boy 3: They can, but they can help their mum at home.

Boy 1: Some girls on the site want to go to secondary school, don't they?

Q337 **Sarah Champion:** I'm interested in what you're saying. Is it part of your identity that you're able to look after your wife, your children?

Boy 3: Yeah.

Q338 **Sarah Champion:** Okay. It's not that you don't want them to work; it's more about how you feel. I get that.

Boy 3: Obviously, if she wants to work, she can, but she obviously wouldn't want to.

Q339 **Jess Phillips:** "She obviously wouldn't want to"? Why? She'll just watch telly or—

Boy 3: She'd be leaving someone else to look after the children.

Q340 **Jess Phillips:** She might not have kids. You might not have kids. Not everybody has kids.

Boy 3: Well, then she can work.



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Q341 **Sarah Champion:** So, [Boy 3], I'm thinking that you've actually got your future planned out. In an ideal future, what age would you get married and what age would you have children?

Boy 3: At 21 get married.

Boy 2: I'd do it at 15.

Jess Phillips: That's illegal, [Boy 2].

Boy 3: Probably about 23, like. Give her a year to see me.

Q342 **Sarah Champion:** To settle down. Do you think you will continue with the Traveller life? Would you stay on the site—?

Boy 3: Probably, yeah, or probably get permanent, like.

Boy 1: Live in a house.

Q343 **Sarah Champion:** Would you only marry another Traveller?

Boy 3: No. You don't have to. It's up to you, isn't it?

Sarah Champion: Yes.

Q344 **Jess Phillips:** But you'd want to live in houses?

Boy 3: I do.

Q345 **Jess Phillips:** What about you, [Boy 1]? You want to live on the site?

Boy 1: Yeah.

Q346 **Jess Phillips:** What about you, [Boy 4]? Would you like to live in a house for more than two months?

Boy 1: I used to live in a house, for one year.

Boy 4: When I run outside the door, there's nobody to chat to. And it's surrounded by a lot of houses.

Q347 **Chair:** Do people shout at you a lot, [Boy 4]?

Boy 4: No.

Chair: You keep talking about people shouting.

Q348 **Jess Phillips:** When you move around, [Boy 4], do your family get moved on?

Boy 4: Yes.

Q349 **Jess Phillips:** Do the police come and move your family on when you move around?

Boy 1: Where we are now, they can't take us off it. It's permanent.

Q350 **Jess Phillips:** No, but when you're travelling, I mean. When you're travelling around and you're going from one place to the next, and let's say you stop off somewhere, do people come and shout at you, and say



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that they want you to leave?

Boy 1: No.

Boy 4: Some people.

Q351 **Chair:** [Boy 3], I am really interested to ask you a question. You are [age] now?

Boy 3: Yeah.

Q352 **Chair:** And you said you will probably be married at 21. Between now and then, do you think you will go back into school or college? Do you think there will be an opportunity to do that?

Boy 3: No, I wouldn't want to.

Q353 **Chair:** What might change your mind on that? Is there anything that would change your mind?

Boy 3: No. I didn't like it. I didn't get on with it—sitting in a classroom all day. I want more freedom than that—to maybe go out for an hour and come back in.

Q354 **Chair:** What about going to college though? That is a bit more freedom. Have any of your friends or mates—the older ones—gone back into college?

Boy 3: No.

Q355 **Chair:** How about you, [Boy 1], do you think you might go back into school when you are older?

Boy 1: No, there's no need.

Q356 **Chair:** Have any of your friends ever done that?

Boy 1: You go to school to get an education and get money, but if you go out to work with your dad you get money. That's what I think.

Q357 **Chair:** So that would make it difficult to go back into college.

Boy 1: No, I wouldn't go.

Boy 3: You're not going to get paid for going to college, are you?

Q358 **Jess Phillips:** I get paid more in the long term.

Boy 3: True, but—

Q359 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Do you think you will carry on having your own tutor, [Boy 1]? You might do some exams or some GCSEs—maybe maths and English—because you said you liked your maths. Do you think that would be useful to have?

Boy 1: Yes. Maths for me is just like I'll count for money.

Q360 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Mental arithmetic, so you have your head going all the time—that is really important to you. A qualification in some kind of



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numeracy would be really useful to you, wouldn't it? If you had a qualification in maths, you could maybe get a better job.

Boy 1: No.

Tonia Antoniazzi: Or are you quite happy to work on the [job] with your dad?

Boy 1: Yes.

Q361 **Chair:** Some people who work on [job], and in all sorts of places, do apprenticeships and things like that. Has anybody you know ever done anything like that—an apprenticeship where you don't need lots of exams behind you, but it gives you a bit of training?

Boy 3: No.

Q362 **Chair:** Is that something you're interested in, [Boy 4]?

Boy 4: No.

Boy 1: [Boy 3] wanted to go to college when he was [age] to learn how to [job].

Boy 3: [name] was saying there was a one-day-a-week course or something. I said I wouldn't mind going, but that was about it.

Q363 **Chair:** How would that work, [Boy 3]? What would you like to do if you were doing that?

Boy 3: I don't know. [course] or something.

Sarah Champion: You get more money that way—if you have a trade.

Q364 **Chair:** So going to college one day a week where they would help you. Then what—go to work on another site?

Boy 3: Probably I would work with my dad and then obviously do that as I go along, or do my own business.

Q365 **Chair:** What do you think the advantage would be of doing that?

Boy 3: You would learn more. You would probably learn, but you wouldn't know it as good as what you would learn from doing it with people teaching you—proper professionals—how to do it.

Q366 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Does your dad teach you?

Boy 3: Yeah, he teaches me how to do stuff. Obviously, he teaches me all he knows.

Q367 **Sarah Champion:** But he only knows what he knows, doesn't he?

Boy 3: Exactly, yeah.

Q368 **Chair:** How about you, [Boy 1]? Does that sound like something that might be interesting to you, having heard what [Boy 3] just said?

Boy 1: I don't know. I said I might do it.



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Q369 **Chair:** [Boy 4], you said that you liked maths when we first asked you a question. If you were going to do something like that, what might you do if you were going to do some more learning? Is there anything? If you like maths, there might be other things you might be able to do.

Boy 4: Jet washing.

Chair: Jet washing is what you're focused on.

Q370 **Sarah Champion:** This is nothing to do with school. Parliament is meant to represent the people of this country so that we get the laws and systems to help everyone in this country so that everyone gets a fair go. Do you think that Gypsies and Travellers are represented in Parliament or at the local council level? Do you think that you and your families have a voice that people in power listen to?

Boy 3: No.

Q371 **Sarah Champion:** How do you think that should change?

Boy 3: I don't know. It's a puzzle to be honest.

Q372 **Sarah Champion:** Does it frustrate you that people don't—

Boy 3: No, not really. I don't care. If they don't want to listen to me, they don't have to.

Q373 **Sarah Champion:** But your ideas about doing an apprenticeship and doing one day a week seem really good. How could you make that happen?

Boy 3: I don't know. [name].

Sarah Champion: What will [name] do?

Boy 3: We were talking about it and I said, "I wouldn't mind doing that." He could probably set it up or something.

Q374 **Sarah Champion:** He's there but he's not allowed to speak, because we're just talking to you. Is [name] a family member? Is he a teacher? What is he?

Boy 3: I don't know what you'd call him.

Sarah Champion: Try.

Boy 1: He's a helper.

Q375 **Sarah Champion:** A helper, okay. So he can help open doors for you and give you advice and that kind of thing.

Boy 3: Kind of like that, yes.

Q376 **Sarah Champion:** Boy 4, have you got anyone like that, who helps you when you move from site to site?

Boy 4: No.



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Q377 **Sarah Champion:** Okay. So no one from the council comes to help you get into school?

Boy 4: Some people do. Every time we move, someone comes and asks, "Will you book your child into school?" and this and that.

Q378 **Sarah Champion:** But do you see them as a friend, or do you see them as like police checking up on you?

Boy 4: A friend.

Sarah Champion: That's good.

Q379 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** [Boy 2], does [name] come into school with you?

Boy 2: Never.

Q380 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Do you have somebody who helps you in school?

Boy 2: I used to have [name], but she doesn't come any more.

Q381 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** So when you go to school, you just go into lessons like everybody else?

Boy 2: Yes, like a normal—

Jess Phillips: You are normal.

Q382 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Of course you are. Do you get taken out of any lessons, or do you go to all of them?

Boy 2: No, I never get taken out of lessons. Oh, [name] used to take me out of maths.

Q383 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** To do extra maths with you, or extra English with you?

Boy 2: No, she just did English with me.

Q384 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Oh, right. So it was just extra support. That's cool. How long ago did [name] go?

Boy 2: Probably once a week—every Tuesday.

Q385 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Right. So she's not been around for a while, then?

Boy 2: No, about four months.

Q386 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Do you think you're going to get another [name]? Are they going to get somebody else to come and work with you?

Boy 2: I don't know.

Q387 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Would you like them to get somebody else to come and work with you?

Boy 2: Yes.

Q388 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Did it help?



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Boy 2: A little bit, yes.

Q389 **Chair:** How did it help?

Boy 2: Because it took me out of maths to learn more English, and then my next lesson was English, so I had more ideas for doing English.

Chair: That's good.

Q390 **Sarah Champion:** [Boy 3], why are you encouraging [Boy 2] to stay in school?

Boy 3: I don't know.

Q391 **Sarah Champion:** Yes you do. Why?

Boy 4: Because school's kind of good.

Boy 3: He says "kind of good". If he wants to go, I'll encourage him to go.

Q392 **Jess Phillips:** What do you think about the fact that it is illegal for your children not to go to school in this country?

Boy 3: Well, if people don't want to go, you can't force them to go, can you?

Q393 **Jess Phillips:** You're absolutely right, but the law in the country is that anyone under the age of 18 has to be in full-time education. What do you think about that?

Boy 4: The law says Traveller people can go out whenever they want.

Q394 **Jess Phillips:** The law doesn't say that.

Boy 4: The law does.

Q395 **Sarah Champion:** Thinking about your children, [Boy 3]—say you had a boy and you had a girl—I'm guessing from what you've said that you'd keep them in primary school.

Boy 3: Until primary school finishes, and then I'd take them out.

Q396 **Sarah Champion:** Would you encourage them to come out? If they wanted to stay in, would you—

Boy 3: No, if they wanted to stay in, I'd leave them to stay in.

Q397 **Jess Phillips:** What about girls mixing with boys?

Boy 3: No. If my girl had finished primary school, she'd be going out. She'd be old enough.

Q398 **Sarah Champion:** But it'd be different for the boy?

Boy 3: Yes, it'd be different for the boy.

Q399 **Sarah Champion:** Why?

Boy 3: I don't know. It's just the boy is a man, really. When he's 13 or 14, he's a man. You have to go to work with your dad or something.



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Q400 **Sarah Champion:** But would you encourage your girl to stay in school?

Boy 3: No, not really.

Q401 **Sarah Champion:** But then what's she going to do? You're going and working, but if a girl comes out of school at 13, what's she meant to do? Just clean the house?

Boy 3: Clean the house, make food.

Q402 **Sarah Champion:** Would she not be bored?

Boy 3: No, not really.

Boy 1: Get her a pet.

Q403 **Sarah Champion:** So really, whatever your children wanted to do, you'd encourage them to do?

Boy 3: Yes. It's up to them. They can make their own decision.

Q404 **Sarah Champion:** I think you're going to be a tough dad., because I see you're protective of your little brother.

Q405 **Boy 2:** I'm not little.

Q406 **Sarah Champion:** Your almost-the-same-size brother. Are you the oldest in your family?

Boy 3: Yes.

Chair: I think we've probably run out of time. We could talk all day, couldn't we? Boys, thank you for coming along. I know that it's a different place to be and we've been asking lots of questions, but can I thank you for taking the time to be here? We really appreciate it.