Like all Travellers, young Travellers are not a homogenous group. They have different needs according to their living circumstances and lifestyles. Both formal and informal responses to their needs should take their cultural and varying needs into consideration.

“The reason why I’m proud to be a Traveller is that because over all the things that have happened over the years, between discrimination and all that, we stuck together, we stood together. I’m proud to be a Traveller. What’s so good about being a settled person? At the end of the day we’re all human beings!”

- Martin Collins, aged 12

As of 2006, 42% of Travellers are under the age of 15, compared with the national average of 21% in the general population. 63% of Travellers are under 25 years of age, compared with 35% of the general population. Traveller youth face many issues, including: lack of access to youth services; discrimination when trying to access commercial recreational services; an increase in drug misuse in the community, the need to reinforce cultural identity, the need to increase participation in decisions that affect their lives.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has several important social rights for young people. This includes such things as the right to participate in leisure, recreational and cultural activities. There have been many young people in the Traveller community that has been able to contribute to the Irish society through Traveller culture, enterprise, excellence in sport, art, and their history and traditions. All young people need a place where their contributions can be made, and be nurtured and celebrated.

The Task Force Report on the Travelling Community (1995) said youth work with Travellers should: “Assist in the development of individual and collective self-esteem through services which are based on standards of excellence, are non-judgemental, accepting, culturally appropriate, encouraging and yet challenging”. The Task Force Report further recommends the development of an equality mechanism, which would identify, track and monitor Traveller involvement in mainstream youth provision.