



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
NEW UNIVERSITY  
EST. 1891

## GTRSB into Higher Ed Pledge

A practical workshop **20<sup>th</sup> October**  
**9:30-13.00**

### About this event

Is your University, College or School interested in learning the practicalities of "Taking the GTRSB into HE Pledge?" to **enhance educational participation** and **inclusion** of Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater learners.

Don't know where to start? Think the processes might be too complicated, or are worried about asking the wrong question, or how to access resources? This event can help to answer those questions and more - in a friendly, **collaborative** learning environment.

If you want to know more - come along for this **free half-day workshop** and hear from a range of professionals working to create a more inclusive and welcoming educational experience for GTRSB learners.

Then join an interactive workshop exercise where you utilise and help to pilot our new 'mapping tool' to identify various stakeholders (from Students, to Families, Academic and PSE staff and Senior Leadership Teams); their needs, preferences and access to resources which can be adapted to suit your educational institution and the GTRSB communities you serve.



**GTRSB**

GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS, ROMA, SHOWMEN AND BOATERS  
INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

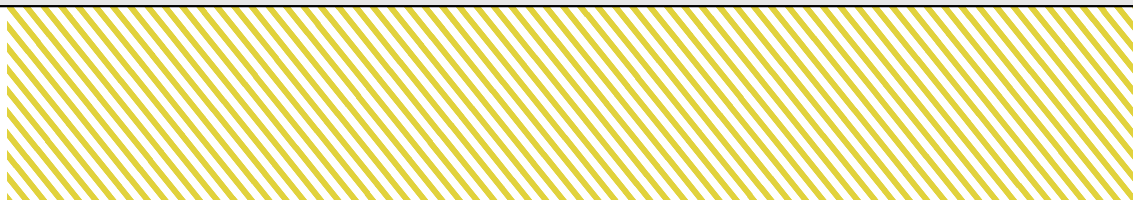
#GTRSBintoHigherEd

INSPIRED.  
EMPOWERED.  
EMPLOYED.



## Programme: Part One

Time	Speaker	Outline
9.30-9.35	Professor Nick Braisby, Vice-Chancellor Buckinghamshire New University	<b>Welcome</b>
9.35-9.50	Margaret Greenfields, Visiting Professor Buckinghamshire New University Sherrie Smith, Buckinghamshire New University	<b>Housekeeping/Introduction to the Event</b>  <b>Overview of The Pledge</b>
9.50-10.15	Sarah-Louise Collins, Winchester University Wendy Price, University of Sunderland (WP and Outreach Leads with responsibility for GRTSB activities)	<b>Adaption and adoption of the Pledge in the local University context</b>
10.15-10.45	Samantha Heeson, Leeds Beckett University. (Specialist Librarian ) Richard O'Neill and Michelle Russell (Authors of "The Show Must Go On")	<b>Panel Session: Learning Resources for use in educational settings (From Universities to Schools)</b>
10.45-10.55	<b>BREAK</b>	





## Programme: Part two

Time	Speaker	Outline
10.55-11.15	Jackie Bolton (GRT Social Work Association) & Charmaine Holmes (Romany/Showman Social Work Student, BNU)	<b>Using the Pledge as a vehicle for mentoring:</b> the Student Experience
11.15-11.30	Paula Strachan, Headteacher, St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Darlington	<b>Creating an inclusive learning environment/innovative curricula for GTRSB children</b> – adapting the Pledge principles in the School setting
11.30-12.00	Go Higher West Yorkshire Collaborative Project (GHWY Commissioners Natalie Aldridge, Janet Brown) and Dr Natalie Forster, Northumbria University	<b>Go Higher West Yorkshire: Uni-Connect network, co-produced research into the support needs GRT students in West Yorkshire:</b> GTRSB young people's aspirations and barriers to entering HE and the experiences of School, FE and University staff in working with GTRSB learners.
<b>12.00-12.10</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
12.10-12.45	Visiting Professor Margaret Greenfields, Associate Professor Rebecca Rochon, Sherrie Smith, Research Associate, Buckinghamshire New University, Karla Inniss, EDI Business Partner, Buckinghamshire New University	<b>Practical Workshop Exercise:</b> Tools to map stakeholders, identify their priorities, barriers and solutions to meaningful engagement and Taking the Pledge + <b>Feedback/Plenary Discussion</b>
12.45-13.00	<b>CLOSE and post event virtual networking</b>	

## Speaker biographies



**Professor Nick Braisby** is Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer at Buckinghamshire New University. He is a Chartered Psychologist and Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society. He studied Natural Sciences at the University of Cambridge and then read for a PhD in Cognitive Science at the University of Edinburgh. Nick obtained a British Academy postdoctoral research fellowship held at the London School of Economics.



**Richard O'Neill** was born and brought up in a traditional nomadic Romani family, an influence which continues to inform his work. A national literacy hero, he is an advocate of using literature to promote inclusion and social mobility. He is interested in how writers and educators ensure a proper understanding of authentic representation and portrayal of Travelling cultures. Richard has had several international literary, cultural and diversity award winning children's books published by Child's Play and Pearson.



**Professor Margaret Greenfields** has extensive experience of co-producing inclusive research and working with Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, refugee and migrant communities in the fields of health and educational engagement. She is increasingly developing her knowledge and practice in working with Showmen and Boaters to enhance their social inclusion. Margaret was an academic at Buckinghamshire New University and is now a Visiting Professor, continuing to support GTRSB into HE Pledge activities and a number of PhD students.



**Michelle Russell**, having traced her family back several generations, is immensely proud of her connections to travelling Showmen. Supporting her brother, professional dancer and choreographer, Adam Russell, she created visual resources to engage visitors with the immersive exhibition 'Fairground Reminiscence'. Collaborating with co-author Richard O'Neill, the ground-breaking children's book, 'The Show Must Go On', was written. Continuing their working partnership and shared passion for stories, Richard and Michelle have also created 'Trails of Tales that Travel'.



**Sherrie Smith** was born and raised in a traditional Romany Gypsy family, living in North London and Hertfordshire. Having had both a successful career as a business woman and a community activist she returned to education as a mature student; gaining her BA in Social Science, Community Development and Youth Work from Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2019. Sherrie works with Buckinghamshire New University as a research assistant on the Gypsy, Roma, Travellers, Showmen and Boaters in Higher Education Pledge project.



**Samantha Heeson** is a qualified librarian and leads on data analysis and management in Library and Student Services at Leeds Beckett University. She provides senior managers, decision makers and academic support colleagues with evidence and insight about learning resource usage, user engagement and library impact. She has worked in Registry, Strategic Planning and Student Centred Change Management teams, as well as in IT project management in a private enterprise. She is also an inclusion champion in the HE and library sectors. Samantha is of Showman heritage.

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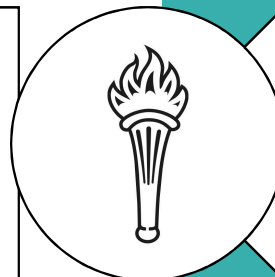
**Natalie Aldridge** leads the Data, Evaluation and Impact team at Go Higher West Yorkshire. With a background in youth work and the third sector, Natalie has worked with countless young people experiencing an array of inequalities and is passionate about ensuring research and evaluation findings have an impact on policy and practice.



**Wendy Price** is Head of Widening Access and Participation at the University of Sunderland. She has over twenty years' experience of working in higher education in a range of roles relating to inclusion and widening access. In her current role Wendy is the institutional contact for GTRSB students and provides a single point of contact to support students at each stage of the student lifecycle. As part of her wider role at the university, Wendy is responsible for providing strategic support for pre-16 educational outreach as well as scholarships and bursaries



**Janet Brown** is a project officer for Data, Evaluation and Impact at Go Higher West Yorkshire and is co-leading on the development of a regional multi-sector stakeholder forum for supporting GRT learners. She has a background in secondary teaching and, more recently, social research into inequalities.



**Rebecca Rochon** is an Associate Professor at Buckinghamshire New University and is actively involved in the development of education professionals as inclusive practitioners. She works across a variety of programmes aimed at developing teaching and learning practice in different contexts, from schools and HE to FE and professional environments.



**Paula Strachan** is Head Teacher of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School. She is passionate in her mission to ensure that all children, regardless of their starting points, are able to shine and become the very best that they can be. She delights in the daily conversations with the children and strives to have a school full of smiles – not just on the children! The diverse school serves 54% of pupils from an ethnic minority group with 26% identifying as GRT. The school and leadership are used by the Catholic Education Service as a role model for schools.



**Karla Inniss** is our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Business Partner at Buckinghamshire New University. She is responsible for driving change. She has 17 years of experience in the public sector along with working in voluntary equality roles. While working full time managing a social care finance department, she decided to study part time as a mature student at BNU. She achieved a first-class Business Management BA Hons. She confesses that balancing ethics and reality is a daily challenge, but she is motivated by seeing what people can change when they work together





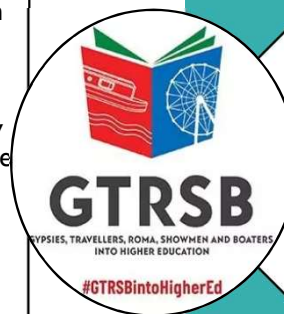
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**Jackie Bolton** is a Traveller social worker of Romani and Showman background. As a child she travelled with her family in summer and attended school in winter. Attending university was never on the radar although she got good results as a student. She worked in the commercial sector for 20 years before joining a charity in the east of England and setting up an advocacy service for Travellers in 2003. She then went to university as a mature student and qualified as a social worker. She worked in children's and adult services, eventually specialising in supporting children affected by child sexual abuse, exploitation and violence. Jackie co-founded the Gypsy Roma Travellers Social Work Association. She believes the more Travellers who enter higher education the better and that the Pledge will help with increasing their access.



**Dr Natalie Forster** is a Research Fellow in Applied Health and Social Care at Northumbria University, whose work centres around a commitment to addressing inequalities in access to public services. Her PhD research challenged common stereotypes about Traveller Community health beliefs, practices and needs, and explored how ethnicity as a Gypsy or Traveller intersects with other identity positions to shape health experiences. Natalie is currently undertaking research to understand the higher education experiences of students from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities, and representations of these groups within widening participation research, policy and practice.

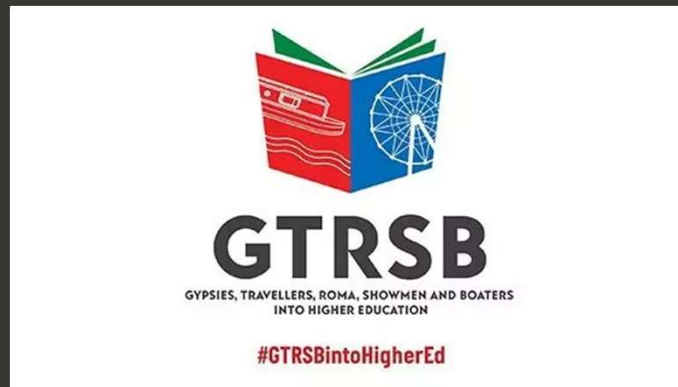


**Charmaine Holmes**, is a social work student. She joined university to make a positive difference to her community. "I went to school to tick the box of education rather than seeing it as important. I got married and had my first two children quite young, then as I got older and saw friends progress, I wanted something more and thought I could help my community. There's still stigma about Gypsies and Travellers from social workers, so I want to change perceptions and improve their outcomes".



**Sarah Harder-Collins** is Head of Participation and Success at the University of Winchester. Sarah has worked in widening participation for the past fourteen years, leading projects and campaigns to support under-represented young people to access higher education at the University of Winchester and across national access programmes. She has a strategic responsibility for the university's Access and Participation Plan, and championed the University of Winchester to be a pathfinder signatory for the GTRSB Pledge. Drawing upon the values-driven innovative evidence-based practice supporting other under-represented student groups, last year the University hosted a national online conference to help shape UK-wide policy and practice supporting GTRSB participation in higher education. This year, the University will be launching the GTRSB support package for students.

Book your ticket [here](#)



To take the pledge, click [here](#)



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