

The background of the entire page is a photograph of several children at an outdoor event. In the foreground, a young girl with brown hair and colorful glitter on her cheeks is smiling. To her right, a boy with face paint is also smiling. Other children are visible in the background, some wearing hats and holding food. Numerous colorful, iridescent bubbles are floating in the air, creating a festive atmosphere. The scene is set outdoors with a white van and a wooden structure visible in the background.

Leeds GATE

Strategy 2026-2031

Introduction from our Chair

Welcome to our strategy 2026-2031. This document has been produced to give a clear direction to our work over the next five years. As a community member, as well as chair of the board, I am extremely proud of Leeds GATE and our amazing team who work with dedication and pride to deliver on our vision.

Elizabeth Spaven



About Leeds GATE

Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (Leeds GATE) is a brave and creative membership organisation led by Gypsy and Traveller people in partnership with others across West Yorkshire.

Founded in 2003, we work alongside Gypsies and Travellers to improve quality of life, challenge racism and inequality, and create lasting change. We support people throughout their lives through advocacy, family support, youth work and community development, while working to improve the systems that shape people's lives.

Everything we do is rooted in community leadership. We are proud to be member-led, with Gypsies and Travellers shaping our priorities, influencing decisions and leading change. Leeds GATE was built through the vision and determination of community leaders including Ada North, Jim Connors, Eileen Lowther and Kim Moloney.

Over the last two decades we have grown from a local organisation into one working across Leeds, Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield. Alongside our members and partners, we have helped develop the nationally recognised Negotiated Stopping approach, created culturally informed mental health services and bought our own community centre.

As we look to the future, we remain rooted in our values, our members and our belief that Gypsy and Traveller communities should be treated equally, have their culture respected and be able to live good lives and build bright futures.

Mission, Vision and Values

Our Mission



We are here for Gypsies and Travellers - improving quality of life across West Yorkshire.

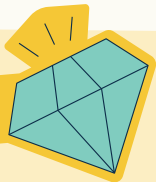
Guided by our values, we support families and individuals at every stage of life. We are member-led, making decisions together as equals. We challenge racism and inequality.

Our Vision



Communities across West Yorkshire where Gypsies and Travellers are treated equally, have their culture respected, can live good lives and build a better future for their children.

Our Values

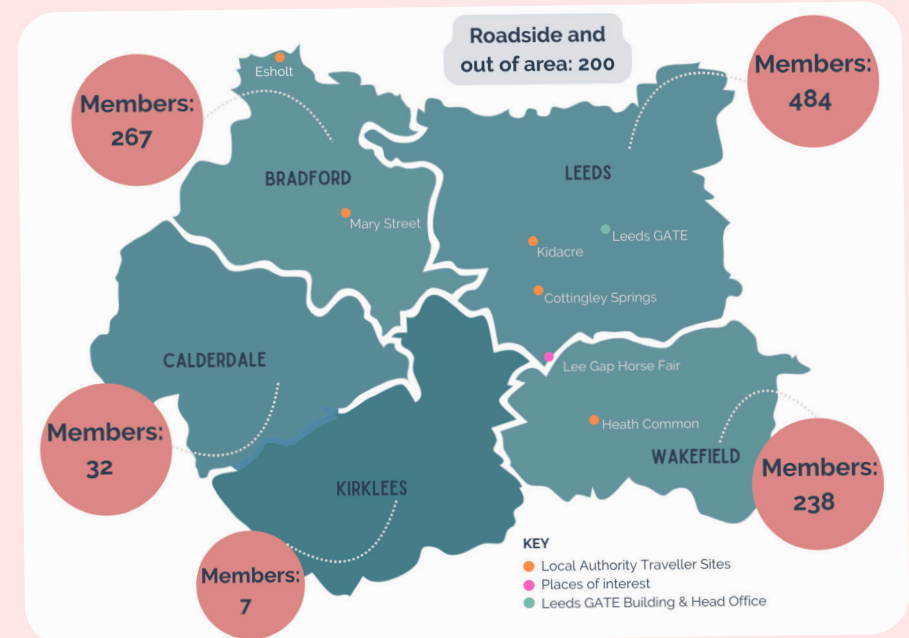


Our values guide every decision we make. They shape how we work with members, partners and one another.

- 1 Leeds GATE belongs to Gypsies and Travellers.
- 2 Leeds GATE is welcoming.
- 3 Leeds GATE respects people's privacy.
- 4 Leeds GATE believes people should be safe.
- 5 Leeds GATE helps people to help themselves.
- 6 Leeds GATE is honest and open.
- 7 Leeds GATE keeps its promises.
- 8 Leeds GATE is brave and creative.
- 9 Leeds GATE believes everyone should be treated equally and included.

Our Members

Total Leeds GATE members 1228¹



Leeds GATE works alongside Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Scottish Travellers across West Yorkshire.

These groups are distinct ethnic minorities. Our members live on local authority sites, private family yards, roadside camps and in houses. Some have lived in West Yorkshire for generations, while others are travelling through the region.

Gypsy and Traveller communities are diverse, resilient and resourceful. Families provide strong support for one another, maintain their cultural traditions and play an active role in their communities. We welcome every Gypsy and Traveller person who wants to be part of Leeds GATE.

1. As of July 2026

Why Our Work Matters

A 2019 review by the Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee described Gypsy and Traveller communities as having “the worst outcomes of any ethnic group”² across education, health, employment, criminal justice and hate crime. These inequalities are reflected across West Yorkshire.



2. Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee report (2019)

Racism and Discrimination



In a 2020 study about the prevalence of experiences of hate crime, one respondent described them as “regular as rain”. 78% said incidents were daily.³

Systemic racism affects every part of life for many Gypsy and Traveller people.

Families experience inequalities in access and

outcomes in education, healthcare, housing, employment and other public services.

Many people also face hate crime, online abuse and negative stereotypes. These experiences damage trust, reduce opportunities and make it harder to access support. At the same time, **Gypsy and Traveller communities have many strengths**. Families and communities provide strong support for one another, creating networks of care that help people through difficult times.

Gypsies and Travellers are communities with strong cultures and traditions over hundreds of years of history into present day.

44% of British adults openly express negative attitudes against Gypsy and Traveller communities - the highest of any group.⁴



Mental Health

Poor mental health is closely linked to wider systemic inequalities. Many people experience trauma, anxiety and depression. Suicide continues to have a devastating impact on families and communities, with many people experiencing loss across generations.

Many Gypsy and Traveller people do not feel safe or understood in mainstream mental health services. Experiences of racism, low literacy and stigma can prevent people seeking help until they reach crisis point. Men are particularly unlikely to ask for support.

3. Greenfields and Rogers. (2020). 'Hate: as regular as rain' pilot study.

4. Equality and Human rights Commission (2018). 'Is Britain Fairer? The state of equality and human rights'



Homes

Across West Yorkshire there is a severe shortage of safe and culturally appropriate accommodation.

Accommodation Needs Assessments identify a need for more permanent pitches, private family sites and safe stopping places in every local authority area. Many existing sites also need investment to improve safety, health and wellbeing.

Families living on the roadside continue to face repeated evictions, limited stopping options and poor access to basic facilities. Across West Yorkshire, **at least 237 additional culturally appropriate family homes are needed.**⁵

9 negotiated stopping sites needed in Leeds



Health

Gypsy and Traveller communities experience significant health inequalities throughout their lives.

Health Needs Assessments consistently identify poorer mental health, maternal health, long-term conditions and lower uptake of screening, vaccinations and health checks.

Improving health requires more than healthcare alone. It also means addressing the wider causes of poor health, including poverty, insecure accommodation, racism, discrimination and unequal access to education and services.

Gypsies and Travellers are almost twice as likely to provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week than average UK population.⁷

Average health of a Gypsy or Traveller person in their 60s is comparable to a White British person in their 80s.⁶

5. Accommodation needs assessments undertaken across West Yorkshire

6. University of Manchester (2021)

7. ONS, Census Analysis, (2021)



Trauma

Many Gypsy and Traveller communities continue to live with the effects of historical and ongoing trauma. Centuries of discrimination, forced assimilation, child removal and exclusion have left lasting impacts.

People experiencing domestic abuse often face additional barriers to finding safety and support. Poverty, disability, sexuality and other forms of inequality can increase these barriers further.

Understanding people's experiences and history is essential to creating services that are safe, trusted and effective.



Education

Many Gypsy and Traveller children and young people experience bullying, discrimination and low expectations in education.

Many feel they are not understood or represented in school. Poverty, caring responsibilities and limited access to culturally appropriate careers advice can also reduce opportunities and affect wellbeing.

Education should recognise and value Gypsy and Traveller culture and heritage. Challenging stereotypes and improving understanding creates schools where children and young people feel safe, respected and able to achieve their potential.

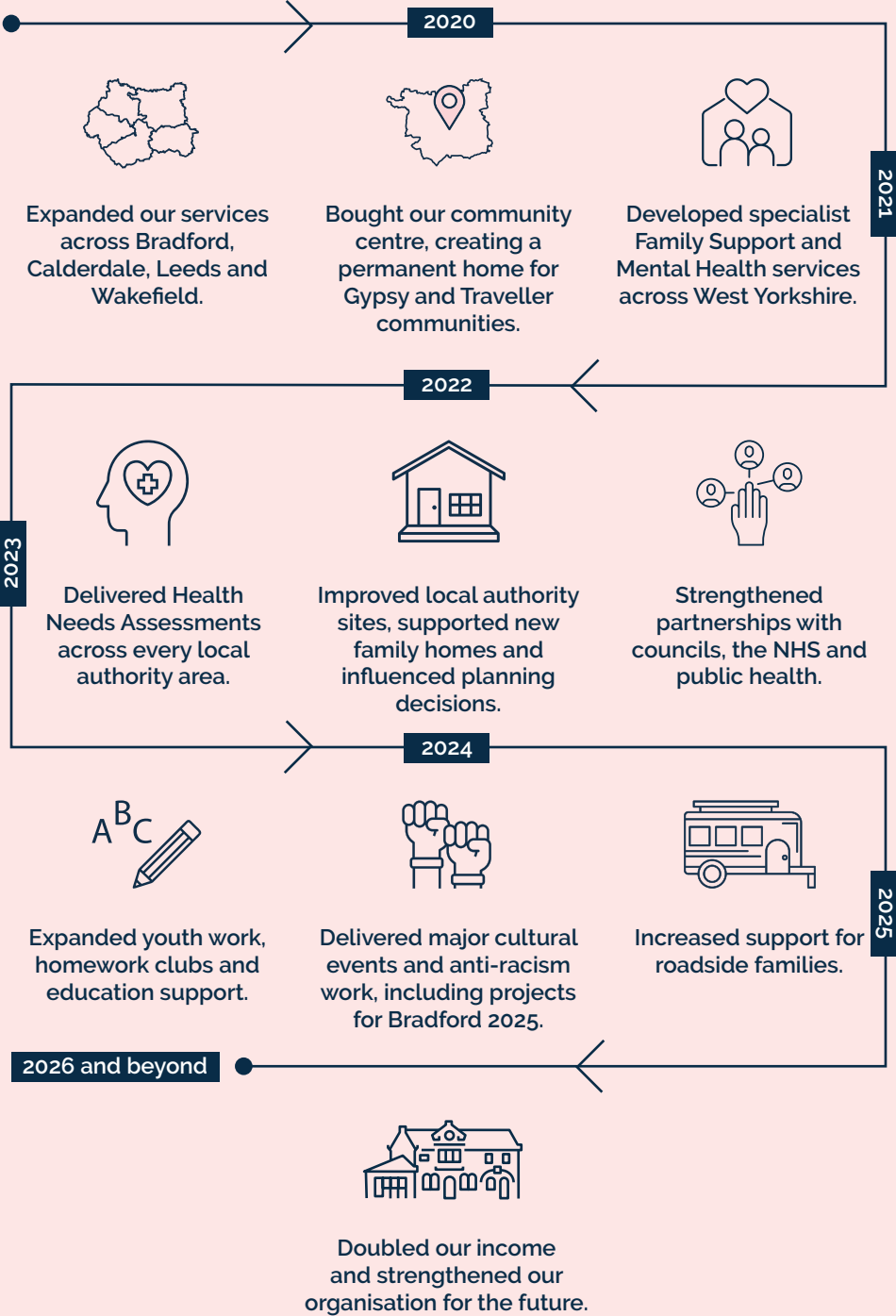
Gypsies and Travellers have the lowest level of attainment for formal academic qualifications, but highest level of self-employment of any ethnic group.⁸

8. ONS, Census Analysis, (2021)

Our Impact

Between 2020 and 2025, Leeds GATE continued to grow as a trusted, member-led organisation supporting Gypsy and Traveller communities across West Yorkshire.

Together with our members and partners, we expanded our reach, strengthened our influence and improved opportunities for families across homes, health, education and inclusion.



What our members told us

As part of this strategy, we spoke with 55 families about their experiences of Leeds GATE and their hopes for the future.

“

Members rated
Leeds GATE **9.5**
out of 10.

People described Leeds
GATE as welcoming,
respectful and supportive.

Many said it feels “like
family” and spoke
about being listened to,
understood and treated
with dignity.

Members valued being
called members rather than
service users because it
reflects their role in shaping
the organisation.

They also told us they want

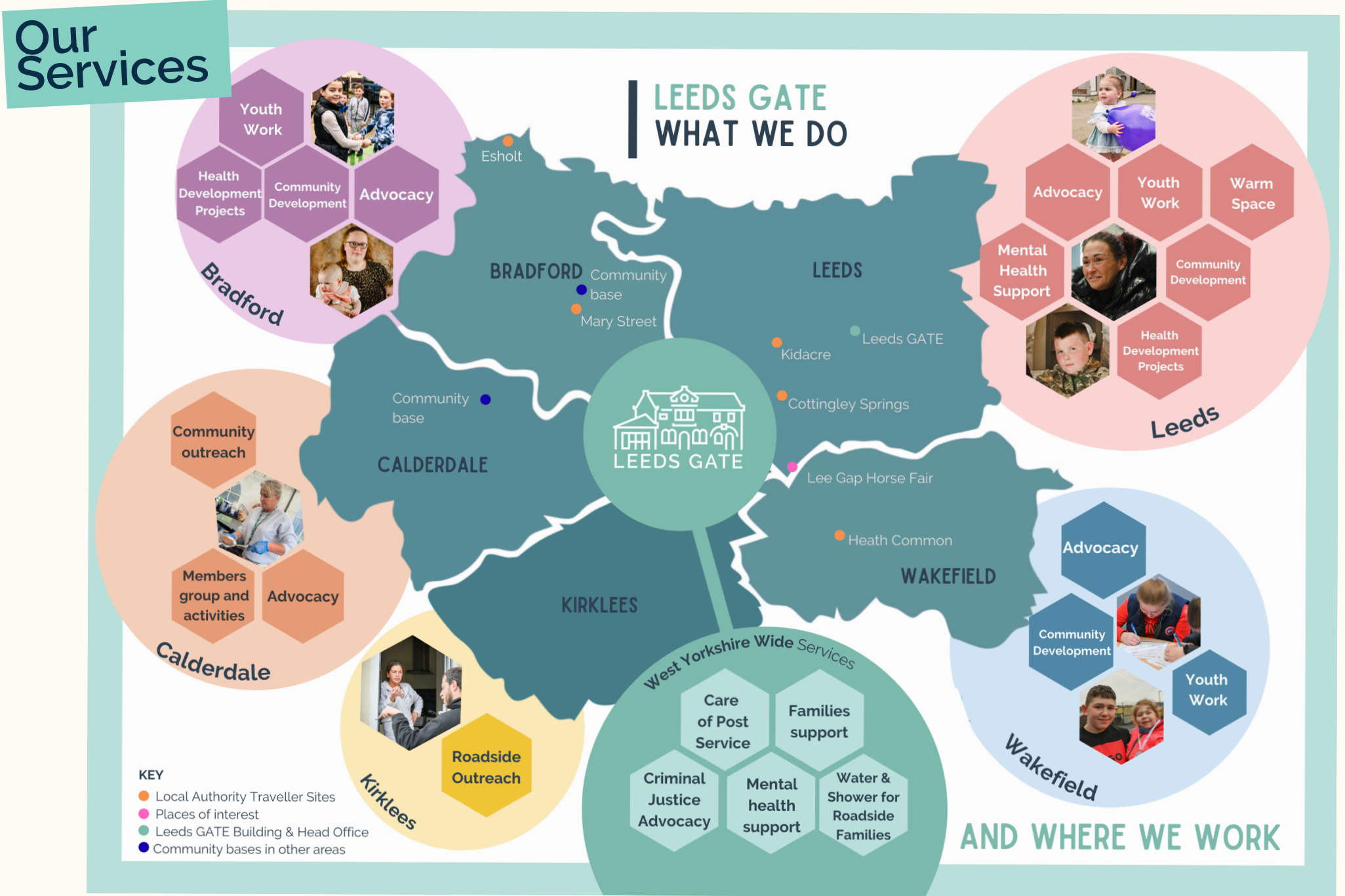
- more opportunities for children and young people
- stronger support for families
- continued action to challenge racism
- more opportunities to influence decisions
- services that remain welcoming and inclusive for everyone.

What our partners told us

Partners described Leeds GATE as a **trusted organisation with strong relationships across communities**, councils and the NHS. They recognised our leadership in advocacy, health, accommodation and community development, and highlighted our ability to bridge the gap between communities and public services.

Partners also recognised that **many of the barriers facing Gypsy and Traveller communities are systemic** and cannot be solved by one organisation alone.





Our Strategic Aims 2026-2031

Over the next five years, these five strategic aims will guide our work. Together, they describe the change we want to see for Gypsy and Traveller communities and for Leeds GATE as an organisation.

Families



Aim

Support our families, children and young people.

Families are at the heart of our work. We want children, young people and adults to have access to opportunities and to feel safe, supported and proud of who they are.

Outcomes

- Families are safe and supported
- Peoples confidence increases
- Children and young people succeed in education and life.

Inclusion



Aim

Challenge racism and celebrate culture.

Gypsy and Traveller culture, heritage and identity enrich our communities and should be valued, respected and celebrated. We will create opportunities for people to influence the decisions that affect their lives while working to challenge racism and inequality.

Outcomes

- Everyone is included at Leeds GATE
- Systemic racism is challenged through community voices
- Culture is celebrated

Homes



Aim

Improve access to safe and culturally appropriate accommodation

Everyone deserves a safe, secure and culturally appropriate place to live. We will work alongside members, partners and decision-makers to improve accommodation, strengthen community leadership and influence the policies and systems that shape where people live.

Outcomes

- People are supported in their accommodation
- Families travelling in West Yorkshire have access to safe, appropriate stopping places
- The number and quality of homes increases

Health



Aim

Reduce health inequalities

We will work alongside members, communities and partners to improve health, reduce inequalities and influence services to provide equitable, culturally appropriate care.

Outcomes

- Mental health improves
- Physical health improves
- Healthcare is accessible

Organisation



Aim

Build a strong and sustainable organisation.

Creating lasting change requires a strong, sustainable and values-led organisation. We will continue to invest in our people, partnerships and resources so Leeds GATE can remain sustainable, member-led and influential.

Outcomes

- We are member led
- Our people thrive
- We are a sustainable and learning organisation

How Leeds GATE Creates Change

The priorities are reflected in how we work and what we hope to achieve. Our work is built around five approaches.



Including people who are often left out and valuing difference

We will make sure our work reaches people who may face additional barriers. This includes people with learning disabilities and neurodiverse needs, older people, men, roadside families and LGBTQ+ people.



Being member led and investing in community leadership

We will strengthen opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers to shape decisions, influence services and lead change. We will continue to invest in membership, community leadership and meaningful participation across the organisation.



Supporting people through advocacy, family support and community facilities

We will continue to develop services that help families feel safe and well



Building confidence through outreach, community development and youth work

Trust is a foundation for any work and we invest in relationships. We will continue to use community development principles to deliver our work and be a community-based organisation.



Challenging racism and influencing systems through evidence, community voice and leadership

We will continue to influence systems across homes, health, education and inclusion by working alongside our members, building strong partnerships, carrying out research and sharing evidence to improve policy and practice.

Building For the Future

This strategy sets the direction for Leeds GATE between 2026 and 2031.

We will review progress regularly with our members, staff, trustees and partners. We will use what we learn to improve our work.

Alongside this strategy, our Finance and Fundraising Strategy and People Strategy will support the long-term sustainability of Leeds GATE.

Over the next five years we will continue to work alongside our members, communities and partners to challenge systemic inequalities, strengthen community leadership and improve lives across West Yorkshire. By staying true to our values, investing in our people and listening to our members, we will continue building a stronger future for Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Together, we can create a West Yorkshire where Gypsies and Travellers are treated equally, their culture is respected, people can live good lives and can build a better future





www.leedsgate.co.uk

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