



Gypsies, Travellers & the Media

Plymouth & Devon Racial Equality Council

An independent organisation committed to promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating racial discrimination.

Specialist Community Development Worker for Gypsies and Travellers since 2004.

Training

Casework

Community development projects

Gypsies and Travellers in Devon

- Approximately 5,000
 - Romany Gypsies
 - New Travellers
 - Showmen
 - Irish Travellers
-
- 3 small council sites
 - 2 large unauthorised sites
 - Numerous small unauthorised sites
 - Private family sites
 - Bricks and mortar

Racism and discrimination

We asked:

What is the single biggest factor which influences the continued racism and discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers in Devon?

The answer was:

The Media.

National Media

Protest over travellers' site
Trade On Gypsies and Travellers' Site

**FAMILIES MUST
SELL LAND
FOR GYPSY
CAMPSITES**

**Gypsies made
life such hell**
STILL STORY: PAGE 4



EASTER HOLIDAY INVASION
**GYPSY HELL
FOR TESSA**

**GYPSY SITE: 'NOW
IT IS WAR'**
by Roger

**MY BIG FAT
GYPSY LIES**

Local Media

TRENCH WARFARE: Travellers set up camp near upmarket housing estate

NEW defences have been put up to guard a village green from travellers.

'Keep the travellers out' say fearful campaigners at Holsworthy.

Neighbours angry over Gypsy plan

Plymouth Gypsy bends planning rules

Fury as plans for two new travellers' sites are revealed

Rallying cry as hundreds of residents attend meeting about gipsy scheme

Online Comments

why are we helping these people who obviously do not care for themselves, their children, their waste, the locals, in fact do they care about anything?

Why should the citizens and Council Tax payers of Devon have to put up with them?

The local tax payer cannot be expected to continue pay for these scroungers.

The so-called Travellers frankly live in squalor, destroy their environment, don't contribute or subscribe to society norms, yet need to live somewhere, need education services, need all their benefit entitlements

Media project 2009 - 2011

- Facilitated by Plymouth & Devon Racial Equality Council
- Working with groups of Romany Gypsies and New Travellers
- Supported by Devon County Council

Establishing a relationship with local newspapers, radio and TV

Meetings with local journalists

Day visit to BBC studios in Plymouth

Workshop with ITV West Country

Representation on ITV's diversity panel

Encouraging greater representation by Gypsies and Travellers in local media

Places on media training courses and workshops

Facilitating opportunities for Gypsies and Travellers to represent themselves in news stories

Encouraging features (rather than news stories) about Gypsies and Travellers in the local media

Media booklet

Written and designed by a group of Romany and New Traveller women.

To encourage Gypsies and Travellers, and others, to challenge inappropriate newspaper articles.

Given out to Gypsies and Travellers across Devon.

Guidance on the different ways to challenge the press

1. Write a letter to be published on the letters page.
2. Write a letter of complaint to the editor of the newspaper.
3. Ring up the newspaper.
4. Comment on line.
5. Contact the Press Complaints Commission.

Sets out advantages and disadvantages of each approach

Ring up the newspaper



Advantages:

You may get to speak to the reporter who wrote the article, have the opportunity to put your point across and have a discussion.

You can put a human side to the story and get the reporter to see the consequences for you and your family of what was written.

A calm and measured approach could prove very effective and help change attitudes.



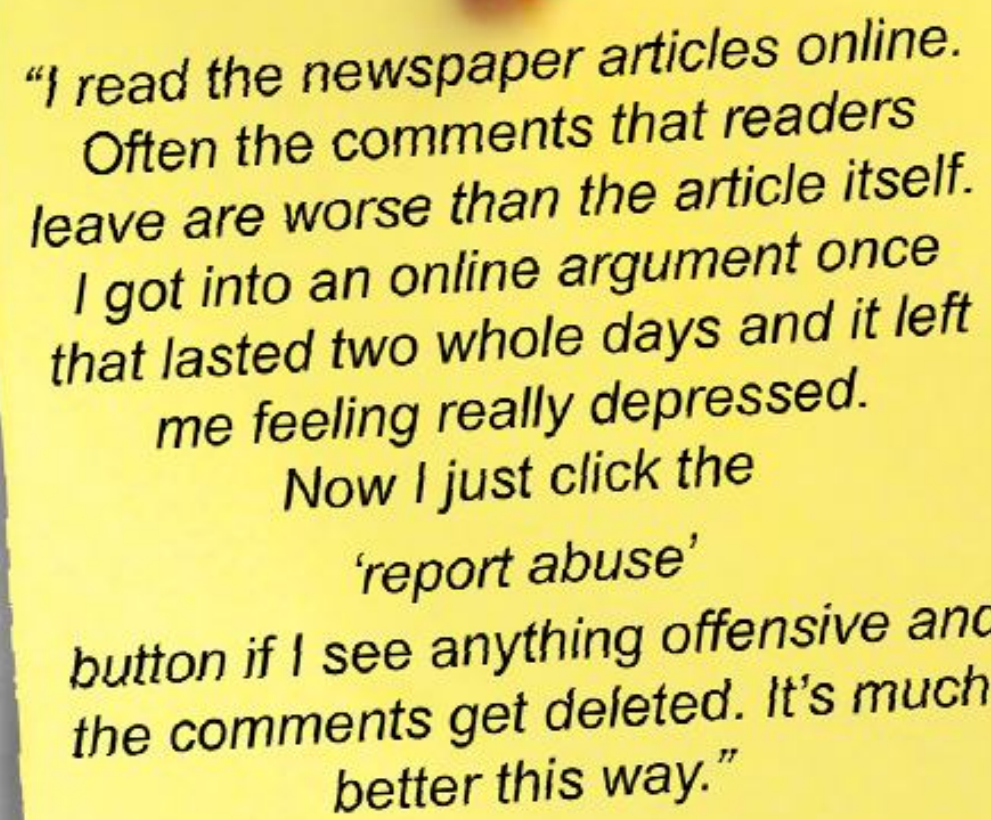
Disadvantages:

You might get drawn into a heated discussion.

One phone call may not be enough. You may need to persist and speak to someone else. They may call you back.

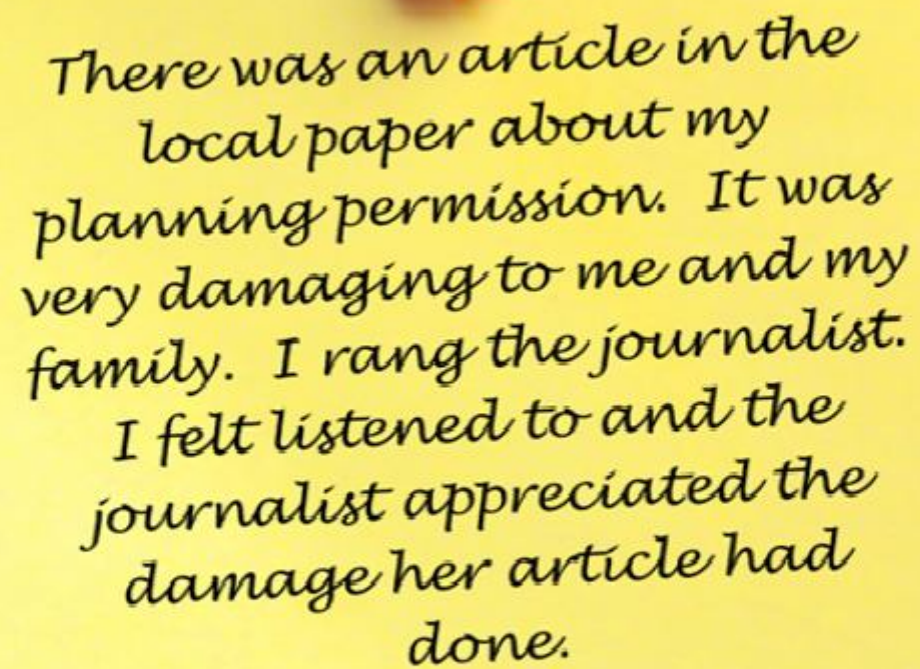
You may feel intimidated if the conversation doesn't go the way you planned.

What you say "on record" can be used in future stories. Avoid "off the record" comments.



*"I read the newspaper articles online.
Often the comments that readers
leave are worse than the article itself.
I got into an online argument once
that lasted two whole days and it left
me feeling really depressed.
Now I just click the
'report abuse'
button if I see anything offensive and
the comments get deleted. It's much
better this way."*

(Romany woman)



There was an article in the local paper about my planning permission. It was very damaging to me and my family. I rang the journalist. I felt listened to and the journalist appreciated the damage her article had done.

(Romany woman)

If negative media articles continue to go unchallenged the situation will never improve for Gypsies and Travellers. You have every right to put your views forward.



Plymouth & Devon Racial Equality Council

14 York Rd, Exeter, EX4 6BA

01392 422566 or 07979 838138

penny@devonrec.org

www.devonrec.org