

ACCOMMODATION ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT services offer support to Travellers experiencing difficulty in their accommodation, benefits and in relating to other mainstream services.

In line with our commitment to empowering Travellers we have been developing the **capacity building** aspect of our work. We have run a total of nine workshops for Travellers living in Hackney, Haringey, Enfield and Tower Hamlets. These were stand alone sessions covering: maintaining a tenancy; new benefit regulations, health issues and how to better access all health related services, the role of Social services, and useful information for young people in their transition into adulthood. Our main purpose was to inform Traveller families of the many ongoing changes within the housing and welfare benefit systems, where to go for extra information, how to deal with the changes accordingly and confidently, and to develop an understanding of all statutory agencies. The workshops were very well attended especially in Haringey where specific services for Travellers are quite limited. It was here that one workshop ended on a very high note where families stayed on and sang their favourite songs together.

The workshops took place in three **Children's Centres**, Woodside in Haringey, and Linden and Anne Taylor in Hackney. These Partnerships with Children's Centres are developing in a very positive way with benefits all round. Travellers become familiar with the services they offer, the Children Centres reach a hard to reach community, and LGTU is able access space and to hold its advice sessions where there is a waiting area and confidential space. The



Accommodation Advocacy and Advice session

Hackney young women's sessions have been able to meet at the Linden Centre and the Anne Taylor centre has provided space for Traveller's meetings and our AGM this year. The Haringey advice sessions are well established at Woodside Children's Centre and are delivered in partnership with Haringey Personal Development Centre. Together these three agencies have raised money and produced a DVD especially for Travellers; to inform the families of the services available to them at Children centres. The Monday Hackney advice sessions will soon be moving to the Ann Taylor Centre.

Social Services continue to approach LGTU to attend case conferences and act as a bridge between families and social workers in a variety of ways.