



BRIEFING PAPER

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Gypsies and Travellers

By Hannah Cromarty

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Contributing Authors: Casie Barton - SGS
Jenny Brown - HAS - S.4, 7 & 12
Gabrielle Garton Grimwood - SES - S.6
Steven Kennedy - SPS - S.11
Andy Powell - EPAS - S.10
Tom Powell - SPS - S.8
Nerys Roberts - SPS - S.9

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Summary

This House of Commons Library briefing paper focuses primarily, though not exclusively, on issues and policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers in England. The devolved administrations have their own policies in areas where responsibility is devolved.

Who are Gypsies and Travellers?

The term 'Gypsies and Travellers' is difficult to define as it does not constitute a single, homogenous group, but encompasses a range of groups with different histories, cultures and beliefs including: Romany Gypsies, Welsh Gypsies, Scottish Gypsy Travellers and Irish Travellers. There are also Traveller groups which are generally regarded as 'cultural' rather than 'ethnic' Travellers. These include 'New' (Age) Travellers and occupational travellers, such as showmen and waterway travellers.

Historically there has been a lack of robust data on Gypsy and Traveller communities. For the first time, the 2011 Census included an ethnic category to collect data on Gypsy, Traveller and Irish Traveller communities. In total around 63,000 people in the UK identified themselves as members of these groups, of which 58,000 were living in England and Wales. The South East region of England had both the largest number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers and the largest number per 10,000 people. However, other sources suggest the 2011 Census figures may be underestimates.

Inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsies and Travellers experience some of the worst outcomes of any group, across a wide range of social indicators. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has published a number of reports highlighting the multiple inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. An EHRC review in 2015 concluded that the life chances of Gypsies and Travellers had declined since the Commission's previous review in 2010. The contributory factors are complex and often inter-related, but may include deprivation, social exclusion and discrimination.

The Coalition Government set up a Ministerial Working Group in November 2010 to look at ways to reduce and tackle the inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. The Ministerial Group published a Progress Report in April 2012 which included 28 commitments from across Government intended to help mainstream services work more effectively with the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The Government published a further summary of progress against each of the commitments in November 2014.

In October 2017 the Cabinet Office published an overview of the main findings from the first release of data from the Race Disparity Audit. The analysis is intended to increase understanding of the disparities between ethnic groups and inform policies to address them.

Following on from the Race Disparity Audit, the Government has provided £200,000 to fund up to six community-led pilot projects intended to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the areas of educational attainment, health and social integration. These pilot projects will be delivered in 2018/19.

The House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee published the report on its inquiry on Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities on 5 April 2019. The Committee concluded that there had been a persistent failure by national and local policy makers to tackle long standing inequalities facing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in a sustained way. The report made 49 recommendations for change.

Racial discrimination

The *Equality Act 2010* protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. Romany Gypsies, Scottish Travellers and Irish Travellers have been declared by the courts to be protected as “races” under the Act.

Nevertheless, Gypsies and Travellers continue to face high levels of racial discrimination, contributing to and exacerbating the inequalities they experience.

Hate crime

In July 2016 the Government published a plan for tackling hate crime, setting out actions to: prevent and respond to hate crime; increase reporting of hate crime incidents; and improve support for victims. In an update to the plan, published in October 2018, the Government committed to refresh the hate crime reporting website True Vision and fund projects to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to respond to hate crime.

The Traveller Movement has campaigned to raise awareness within the Gypsy and Traveller communities about hate crimes and the need to report them.

Accommodation

Many Gypsies and Travellers now live in settled accommodation and do not travel, or do not travel all of the time, but nonetheless consider travelling to be part of their identity. At the 2011 Census, the majority (76%) of Gypsies and Irish Travellers in England and Wales lived in bricks-and-mortar accommodation, and 24% lived in a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure.

The total number of Traveller caravans in England in July 2018 was 22,662, an increase of 29% since July 2008. The majority (57%) of caravans were on private sites, 29% were on sites operated by local authorities and registered providers of social housing, and 14% were on unauthorised sites. Studies have raised concerns about environmental conditions on some Traveller sites. The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee has called for action to improve standards.

Local authorities are no longer required to carry out a specific, separate assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in their local area, although they still have a general duty to assess the housing needs of everyone in their area.

Planning

Responsibility for planning for the provision of sufficient Gypsy and Traveller sites in England lies with local authorities, who are best placed to assess the needs of their communities. It is widely acknowledged, though, that there is a national shortage of suitable permanent and transit Traveller sites.

The Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites encourages local authorities to: formulate their own evidence base for Gypsy and Traveller needs; provide their own targets relating to pitches required; and identify a suitable five-year supply of sites to meet those needs. The decision to change the definition of 'Traveller' for planning related purposes, so that it excludes those who have permanently ceased travelling, has attracted criticism from the community.

There are challenges in turning evidenced need for accommodation into the provision of new sites, including acquiring appropriate land and overcoming objections from local residents. Research by Gypsy and Traveller organisations in 2016 concluded that local authorities had made insufficient progress in identifying a suitable five-year supply of sites. The advocacy group Friends Families and Travellers (FFT) has called on the Government to re-introduce targets and a statutory duty to meet the assessed accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised and updated in July 2018, with some further minor amendment in February 2019. The update added Travellers who do not meet the definition within the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites to the list of those groups whose need for homes should be identified.

The Government has said that it will consider writing to those local authorities that do not have an up-to-date plan for Travellers in place, to expedite the requirements of national planning policy, and highlight examples of good practice.

Unauthorised encampments and developments

In July 2018, there were 3,093 caravans on unauthorised sites. Of these, 2,149 caravans were on land owned by Travellers and 944 caravans were on land not owned by Travellers. The number of caravans on unauthorised sites fell by 17% from July 2017 to July 2018. The proportion of Traveller caravans on unauthorised sites has fallen from 22% in July 2008 to 14% in July 2018.

Unauthorised sites are frequently a source of tension between the travelling and settled communities. Public bodies have a range of powers to deal with unauthorised sites. However, there are concerns that unauthorised development and encampments remain a significant issue.

In April 2018, the Government launched a consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments. The Government's consultation response, published on 6 February 2019, announced a package of measures "to achieve the Government's overarching aim of fair and equal treatment for travellers, while respecting the interests of the settled community". The measures include:

- stronger powers for the police to respond to unauthorised encampments;
- practical and financial support for local authorities to deal with unauthorised encampments and developments;
- support for traveller-site provision; and
- support for the travelling community to improve life chances.

The Government intends to publish further consultations on police powers and options for strengthening policy on intentional unauthorised development. It will also review whether to make deliberate trespass a criminal offence.

Health needs

A number of studies have identified the poor health experiences of Gypsy and Traveller groups compared with the general population, including higher rates of mortality, morbidity and long-term health conditions, low child immunisation levels, and a higher prevalence of anxiety and depression. A range of factors, such as poor accommodation, discrimination, poor health literacy, and a lack of cultural awareness and understanding by health professionals of Gypsy and Traveller health and social needs, are thought to create barriers to accessing healthcare.

The National Inclusion Health Board has called for more joined up working by local authorities, the NHS and responsible health agencies, and local public health services to improve the health outcomes of Gypsies and Travellers. It also emphasised the importance of building community cohesion in order to develop a healthy and sustainable environment for the Traveller community. The Royal College of General Practitioners has published a toolkit on commissioning for socially excluded groups. NHS England has published a leaflet for Gypsy and Travellers communities to explain how they can register with a doctor.

The Government has commissioned research to investigate approaches to community engagement that are most likely to enhance trust between Gypsy and Traveller communities and health services. The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee has made a number of recommendations to improve health policy and service provision for Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Education

Children from Gypsy and Traveller communities attain and progress significantly below the national average throughout compulsory

education. In 2018, 19% of pupils from Irish Traveller backgrounds and 13% from Gypsy and Roma backgrounds attained GCSEs in English and Maths at grade 4/C or above, compared to 64% of pupils nationally. Gypsy and Traveller pupils also have a high rate of school exclusions and report high levels of bullying and racial abuse.

Children who are travelling may be dual-registered (ie. on the roll of more than one school at the same time), may enrol at a school at their current location, or may be home educated. Local authorities are required to have a Fair Access Protocol to help place children who need a school place outside the normal admissions rounds. Department for Education guidance stresses the importance of providing additional support to address the needs of children from groups at higher risk of exclusion.

Employment and training

The 2011 Census found that Gypsy or Irish Traveller was the ethnic group with the lowest employment rates and highest levels of economic inactivity. Of those who were economically active, Gypsies and Irish Travellers were more likely to be unemployed (20%) and self-employed (25%) than the general population in England and Wales.

Over half of economically inactive Gypsies and Irish Travellers were either looking after the home or family (31%) or were long term-sick or disabled (28%). Inactive Gypsies and Travellers were significantly less likely to be students or retired than the general population.

There is evidence that Gypsies and Travellers face barriers in accessing employment. The Coalition Government implemented measures intended to increase Gypsy and Traveller access to mainstream employment services, and to improve data collection on Gypsies and Travellers.

180 apprenticeships were started by Gypsies or Irish Travellers in the 2017/18 academic year, 0.05% of all apprenticeships. The '5 Cities Project', launched in February 2018, aims to increase the number of people in underrepresented groups who take up apprenticeships.

Benefits and tax credits

Very limited information is available on receipt of benefits and tax credits by Gypsies and Travellers. 2011 Census data suggests higher levels of need among the Gypsy and Traveller community compared with the population as a whole. Anecdotal and qualitative evidence, on the other hand, indicates that historically, Gypsies and Travellers have made little use of Jobcentre Plus services, and may have a cultural bias against claiming out-of-work benefits.

Major changes to the benefits system are currently underway, and groups representing Gypsies and Travellers are concerned that welfare reforms "pose a significantly greater risk of negatively impacting on Gypsies and Travellers".

Criminal justice system

There are problems establishing exactly how many Gypsies and Travellers are in prison or in the youth justice system. However, a report by HM Inspectorate of Prisons, published in 2014, found that prisoners who identified as Gypsy or Traveller were significantly over-represented in the prison population and were more likely to have concerns about their safety and to have suffered victimisation. There is also evidence that Gypsy and Traveller children are significantly over-represented in the youth justice system.

An independent review, chaired by David Lammy MP, investigated the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals in the criminal justice system. The final report of the review, published on 8 September 2017, set out 35 recommendations to reform the system. The Government's response to the review commits to publish more and better data on race and ethnicity where possible. It has set up a Race and Ethnicity Board, chaired by the Ministry of Justice, to monitor implementation of the recommendations.

1. Who are Gypsies and Travellers?

1.1 Definition

The term 'Gypsies and Travellers'¹ is difficult to define as it does not constitute a single, homogenous group, but encompasses a range of groups with different histories, cultures and beliefs including: Romany Gypsies, Welsh Gypsies, Scottish Gypsy Travellers and Irish Travellers.

[The Traveller Movement](#) states that:

Irish Travellers and Romany Gypsies are an indigenous minority ethnic group, documented as being part of Irish and British society for centuries. Their distinctive way of life, values, culture and traditions manifest themselves in Traveller 'nomadism', the centrality of the extended family, their own language and the entrepreneurial nature of their economy. Travellers traditionally travelled to seek work to survive.²

Many Gypsies and Travellers now live in settled accommodation and do not travel, or do not travel all of the time, but nonetheless consider travelling to be part of their identity.

There are also Traveller groups which are generally regarded as 'cultural' rather than 'ethnic' Travellers.³ These include 'New' (Age) Travellers and occupational travellers, such as showmen (fairground and circus people) and waterway travellers.

Roma

At the European level the term 'Roma' covers a wide range of communities. According to the European Commission:

Roma is the term commonly used in EU policy documents and discussions, although it encompasses diverse groups that include names like Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Manouches, Ashkali, Sinti and Boyash.⁴

In the UK the term 'Roma' is generally used for people of Roma origin who have come to the UK from Central and Eastern Europe in recent years, particularly following the end of the Cold War and successive enlargements of the EU in 2004 and 2007.⁵ Roma are regarded as being distinct from British Gypsies and Travellers, although they often face similar challenges.

This briefing paper focuses primarily on the issues and policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers.

For an overview of Roma-specific issues see Chapter 7 of the House of Commons Women and Equalities inquiry report on [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#) (April 2019).

¹ In recognition of the distinct identities of these groups it is conventional to capitalise the initial letters of these words.

² The Traveller Movement webpage, [Our Background](#), 6 September 2015

³ The Traveller Movement webpage, [Cultural History](#), 15 October 2015

⁴ European Commission webpage, [EU and Roma](#) [Accessed 27 April 2018]

⁵ [The UK's National Strategy for Roma Integration](#), March 2012, p2

Further information

More detailed information on the ethnic and cultural background of Gypsies and Travellers is provided by the Traveller Movement on their web page on history and culture:

(<https://travellermovement.org.uk/about/gypsy-roma-traveller-history-and-culture>)

1.2 How many Gypsies and Travellers are there?

Historically there has been a lack of robust data on Gypsy and Traveller communities. A number of factors are thought to have contributed to this including: respondents' mistrust of officials; the fear of discrimination; long standing social exclusion; low levels of literacy; recording of nationality rather than ethnicity; and the complexities of collecting data from mobile households.⁶

The 2011 Census attempted to identify Gypsies and Travellers as a distinct ethnic group, but different ethnic classifications were used on Census questionnaires in England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. In England and Wales the Census questionnaire included a category for "Gypsy or Irish Traveller"; in Scotland this category was called "Gypsy/Traveller"; while in Northern Ireland the equivalent category was "Irish Traveller".⁷

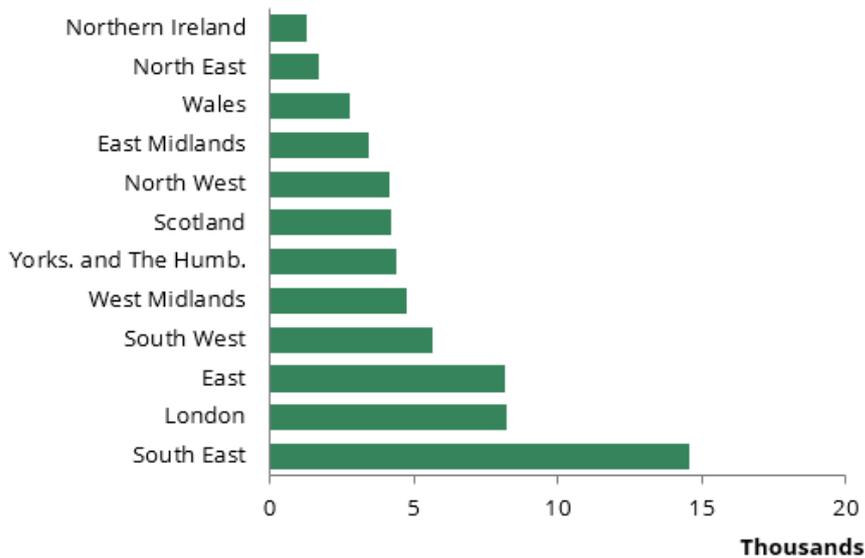
In total around 63,000 people in the UK identified themselves as members of these groups at the 2011 Census, of which 58,000 were living in England and Wales, 4,000 were living in Scotland, and 1,000 were living in Northern Ireland.

⁶ See for example: Irish Traveller Movement in Britain, [Gypsy and Traveller population in England and the 2011 Census](#), August 2013, p2

⁷ To reflect these differences, Section 1 of this briefing paper will refer to "Gypsies, Travellers, and Irish Travellers" when discussing the population in these groups across the UK as a whole, and "Gypsies and Irish Travellers" when discussing just those living in England and Wales.

WHERE DO GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND IRISH TRAVELLERS LIVE?

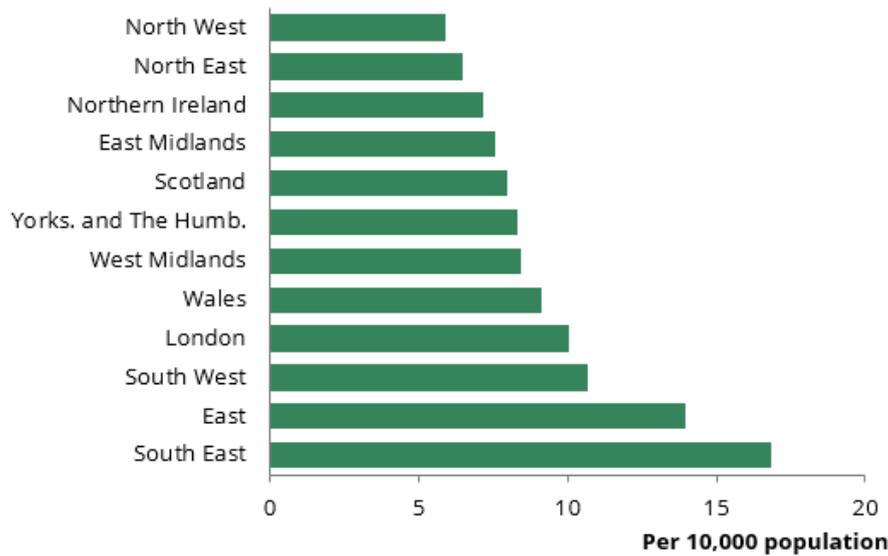
Gypsies, Travellers, and Irish Travellers by nation and region, UK, 2011 Census



Source: 2011 Census, Table KS201UK - Ethnic group

GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND IRISH TRAVELLERS PER 10,000 PEOPLE

Gypsies, Travellers, and Irish Travellers by UK nation and region, UK, 2011 Census



Source: 2011 Census, Table KS201UK - Ethnic group

The above charts show Census estimates of the number of Gypsies, Travellers, and Irish Travellers living in each country and region of the UK in March 2011. The first chart shows the absolute number of people in these groups living in each part of the UK, while the second chart shows the number per 10,000 people.

The South East region had both the largest number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers, and the largest number per 10,000 people. However, while London and the East had a similar number of people in these groups, the East had a larger number relative to its overall population. Wales had the third smallest absolute number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers

among the countries and regions of the UK, but was ranked 5th on the number per 10,000 people.

The map overleaf shows the number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers per 10,000 people at the 2011 Census broken down by Parliamentary constituency. The constituency with the largest number per 10,000 people was Basildon and Billericay (80), while the constituency with the smallest was Mansfield (0.2).

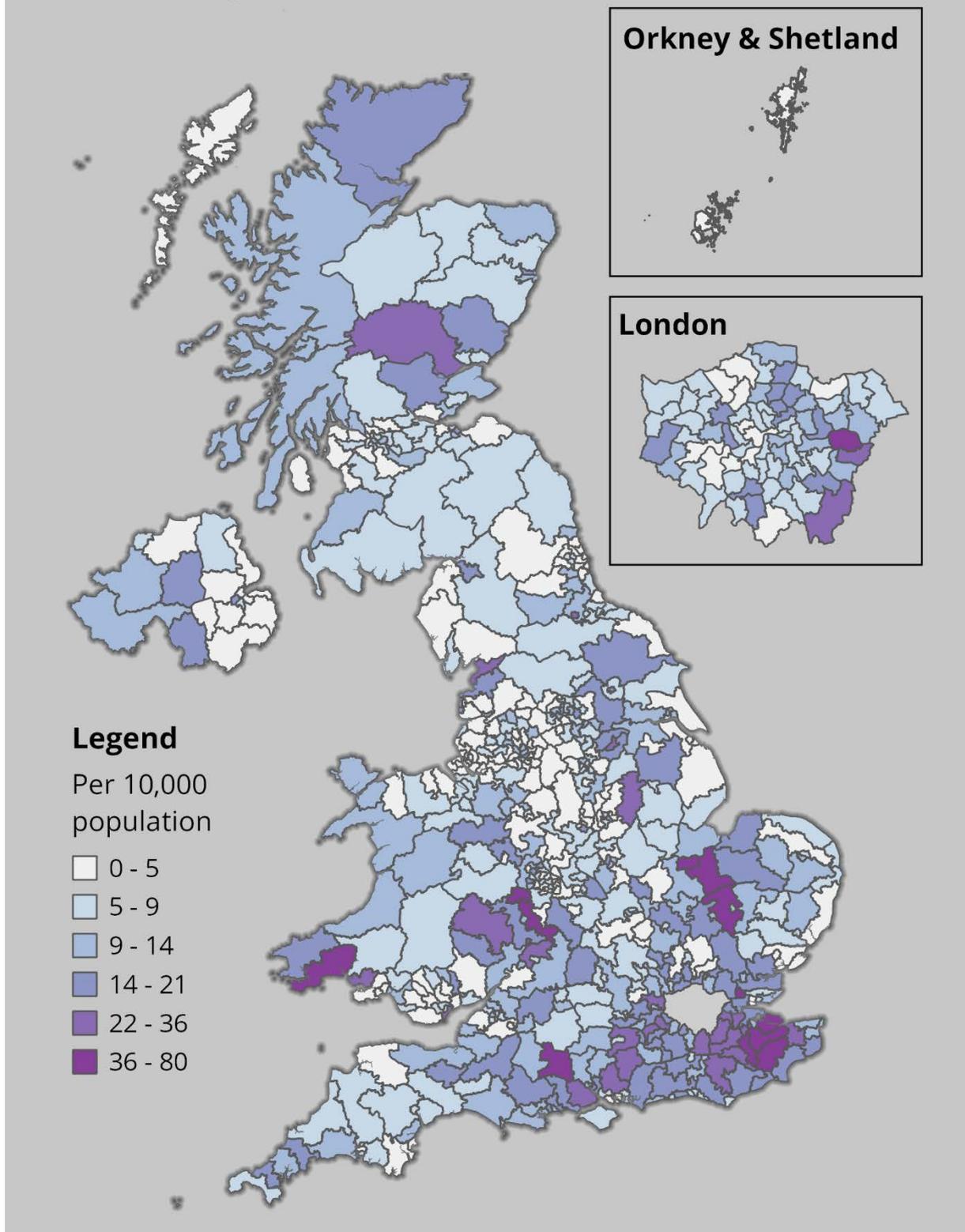
Other sources suggest these Census figures may be underestimates; the Traveller Movement has estimated a population of around 120,000 in England,⁸ and the Council of Europe has estimated a population of between 150,000 and 300,000 in the UK.⁹ However, it is difficult to directly compare estimates as they use different methodologies and definitions.¹⁰

⁸ Irish Traveller Movement in Britain, [Gypsy and Traveller population in England and the 2011 Census](#), August 2013

⁹ Council of Europe, [Estimates on Roma population in European Countries](#), July 2012

¹⁰ For a critique of ethnicity statistics see: Radical Statistics No 114, [Why we need to up our Numbers Game: A non-parametric approach to the methodology and politics of the demography of Roma, Gypsy, Traveller and other ethnic populations](#), Acton, T., Acton J.H., Acton J., Cemlyn S, and Ryder A, 2016

Gypsies, Travellers and Irish Travellers by constituency, 2011



Source: 2011 Census, Table KS201UK - Ethnic group

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1.3 Country of birth

The majority of those who identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller in the 2011 Census in England and Wales were born in Europe (99%) compared with 92% of all residents. 8% of the Gypsy or Irish Traveller group were from non-UK EU countries, compared with 4% of all respondents in England and Wales.

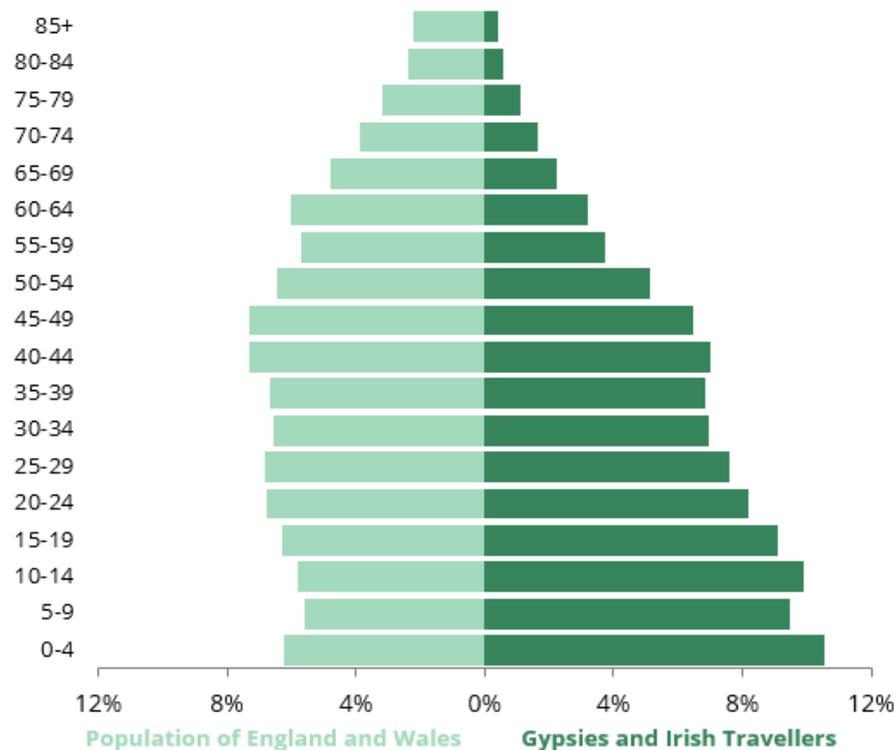
A 2016 report by the Traveller Movement, commissioned by the National Inclusion Health Board, found that 70% of Gypsies and Travellers interviewed resided under 25 miles from their birth place.¹¹

1.4 Gender and age

Equal numbers of men and women identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller in the 2011 Census. The population has a young age profile; in the 2011 Census the median age of Gypsies and Irish Travellers in England and Wales was 26 years compared to the national median of 39 years. Gypsies and Irish Travellers below 20 years of age accounted for 39% of the ethnic group compared to 24% in this age group for the overall population of England and Wales.

GYPSIES AND IRISH TRAVELLERS ARE YOUNGER THAN THE POPULATION

Gypsies and Irish Travellers by age, England and Wales, 2011 Census



Source: 2011 Census, Table DC2101EW - Ethnic group by sex by age

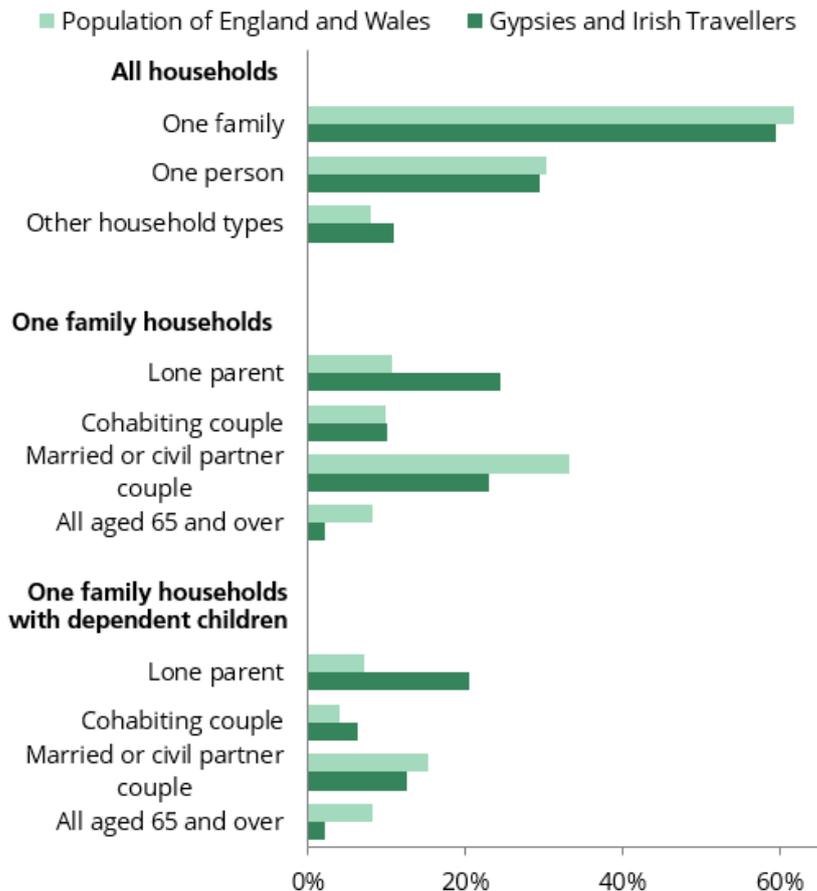
¹¹ Department of Health, National Inclusion Health Board, [Impact of insecure accommodation and the living environment on Gypsies' and Travellers' health](#), 8 January 2016

1.5 Household composition

There were 20,500 households¹² in England and Wales with a household reference person¹³ who identified as a Gypsy or Irish Traveller in the 2011 Census. The most common family household type was 'lone parent' at 24%, compared with 11% of all households in England and Wales. The second most common household type was 'married or same-sex civil partnership couple' at 23%, which was less than the 33% recorded for the population as a whole.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION OF GYPSY AND IRISH TRAVELLER HOUSEHOLDS

Percentage of households, England and Wales, 2011 Census



Source: 2011 Census, Table DC1201EW - Household composition by ethnic group of Household Reference Person (HRP)

45% of Gypsy or Irish Traveller households had dependent children in 2011, well above the average for the whole of England and Wales (29%). This is consistent with the younger age profile of the ethnic group.

¹² ONS Household composition classifies households according to the relationship between the household members. Households may be one or more families or they may consist of one person living alone or unrelated adults sharing.

¹³ Household Reference Persons provide an individual person within a household to act as a reference point for producing further derived statistics and for characterising a whole household according to characteristics of the chosen reference person.

2. Inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsies and Travellers in England have some of the worst outcomes of any group across a range of social indicators. This section of the briefing paper provides an overview of some key reports which have provided evidence on a wide range of inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. The following sections of this briefing paper (3 to 12) explore the issues and action taken to address inequalities in more detail.

2.1 The Equality and Human Rights Commission

Research published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in 2009 – [Research report 12: Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities - A review](#) - presented evidence of Gypsies' and Travellers' wide-ranging experiences of inequality and concluded:

...the problems are immense, and continue to have a direct detrimental impact on the quality of life of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain today. Public authorities, a range of public and private organisations with which Gypsies and Travellers have contact, and the wider public, all need to take urgent action to ensure that Gypsies and Travellers have access to the same services and can exercise the same rights as the rest of the population...¹⁴

Subsequent EHRC reports entitled [How Fair is Britain?](#),¹⁵ published in 2010, [Human Rights Review](#),¹⁶ published in 2012, and [Is Britain Fairer? The state of equality and human rights 2015](#),¹⁷ published in 2015, have continued to draw attention to the inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. The latter report concluded that the inequalities between the country's most disadvantaged groups and the general population were growing:

Our evidence shows that **Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, homeless people, people with learning disabilities, and migrants, refugees and asylum seekers** often suffer multiple disadvantages including poor outcomes in educational attainment and employment, and barriers to accessing healthcare.

The life chances of these four groups, already lower than those of others, have declined since the Commission's last progress review

¹⁴ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Research Report 12: Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller Communities - A Review](#), S. Cemlyn, M. Greenfields, S. Burnett, Z. Matthews and C. Whitwell, 1 February 2009, Executive Summary, p7

¹⁵ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [How fair is Britain? Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations in 2010 – The First Triennial Review](#), 1 October 2010

¹⁶ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Human Rights Review 2012: How fair is Britain? An assessment of how well public authorities protect human rights](#), March 2012

¹⁷ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Is Britain Fairer? The state of equality and human rights 2015](#), October 2015

in 2010. There are several factors that may be contributing to this, including deprivation, social invisibility, stigma and stereotyping.

Greater evidence on the experiences of these groups can make it easier to analyse and address a growing inequality.¹⁸

The EHRC subsequently published a [spotlight report](#)¹⁹ in March 2016 which included findings on the experiences of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in relation to: education; work and standard of living; health; prisons; and stigmatising treatment. The latest EHRC report [Is Britain Fairer? The state of equality and human rights 2018](#) concludes again that “Gypsy, Roma and Travellers face multiple disadvantages across different areas of life”.²⁰

2.2 Ministerial Working Group on Gypsies and Travellers

The Coalition Government set up a Ministerial Working Group in November 2010 to look at ways to reduce and tackle the inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. The Group included Ministers from key government departments under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The Ministerial Group published a [Progress Report](#) in April 2012 which included 28 commitments from across Government intended to help mainstream services work more effectively with the Gypsy and Traveller communities.²¹

In November 2014, the Government confirmed there had been regular meetings between Gypsy and Traveller organisations and officials across Whitehall to discuss the progress made against the Government’s 28 commitments.²² At the same time, a [summary of progress](#) against each of the commitments was deposited in the Library of the House.²³

2.3 Race Disparity Audit

The Prime Minister launched an audit in August 2016 to look into racial disparities in public services. A report, [Race Disparity Audit: Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website](#), published in October 2017, provides an overview of the main findings from the first release of data from the Race Disparity Audit. The report reviews each topic on the [Ethnicity Facts and Figures website](#), and presents an overview of disparities that have most impact across all aspects of people’s lives.

¹⁸ Equality and Human Rights Commission webpage, [England's most disadvantaged groups](#) [Accessed 27 April 2018]

¹⁹ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Is England Fairer? Spotlight Report: The experience of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in England](#), March 2016

²⁰ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Is Britain Fairer? The state of equality and human rights 2018](#), 25 October 2018, p10

²¹ MHCLG, [Reducing Inequalities for Gypsies and Travellers: Progress Report](#), 4 April 2012

²² [Written PQ HL2504 \[Travellers\] 11 November 2014](#)

²³ Deposited Paper DEP2014-1503, 11 November 2014

The analysis is intended to increase understanding of the disparities between ethnic groups and inform policies to address them:

The Audit shows a complex picture. Some of the disparities identified are uncomfortable and some give genuine cause for optimism. In some measures there are significant disparities between and within ethnic groups, and in others there has been a narrowing of the gaps between ethnicities. There are also big differences in outcomes in different parts of the country.

Although there are many areas where the gaps between groups have narrowed significantly, there is still a way to go before we have a country that works for everyone regardless of their ethnicity. It is important that Government is transparent about this, and publishing the data allows people to see how services are performing and highlight where changes are needed. It also challenges us all to show leadership, take accountability and identify where we need to do things differently.

As part of this, I expect local and national service providers to look at the data in the Audit and use it to identify where they most need to improve and where they really need to be offering a better service. And I know charities; academics, community groups and the private sector will also find this data valuable to inform their work to improve our country. We will publish more data over time and encourage people who provide and use public services to collect better data to help build the picture of the outcomes being delivered.²⁴

Some of the findings of the Race Disparity Audit are discussed further in the following sections of this briefing paper.

The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee has recommended that:

...the Cabinet Office create a specific workstream within the Race Disparity Unit for eliminating Gypsy and Traveller inequalities. The Unit should work closely across Government departments to ensure that the “explain or change” process is completed promptly and that every Government department has a strategy to tackle Gypsy and Traveller inequalities that are uncovered. Each department should have a strategy in place before the end of 2019...²⁵

Pilot projects to improve outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers

Following on from the Race Disparity Audit, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, working with the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education, provided £200,000 to fund up to six community-led pilot projects intended to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the areas of educational attainment, health and social integration.

²⁴ Cabinet Office, [Race Disparity Audit: Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website](#), 10 October 2017,

²⁵ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), HC 360 2017-19, 5 April 2019, para 41

Applications for the fund closed on 18 February 2018. The projects will be delivered in 2018-19.²⁶

The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee has called on the Government to “write to us when the pilot projects are complete setting out the conclusion from the evaluations of the pilot projects, stating which ones will be taken forward, and setting out the Department’s plan and timescales”.²⁷

2.4 House of Commons Select Committee reports

The **House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee** published the [report on its inquiry on Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#) on 5 April 2019.²⁸

The Committee concluded that there had been a persistent failure by national and local policy makers to tackle long standing inequalities facing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in a sustained way. On publication of the report the Committee Chair said:

Gypsy Roma and Traveller people have been comprehensively failed by policy makers and public services for far too long. Access to education, health, employment, criminal justice, tackling hate crime and domestic violence - all these require services which differentiate between different groups who have different needs, and yet so many services are ill-equipped to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people. The Government must stop filing this under 'too difficult' and set out how it intends to improve health, education and other outcomes for these very marginalised communities who are all too often "out of sight and out of mind".

While the number of Gypsy Roma and Traveller people in the UK may be small compared to other groups, the Government’s commitment to race equality must reach even the most disenfranchised.²⁹

The report made 49 recommendations for change. The Committee awaits the Government’s response.

The **House of Commons Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee** published a report, [Gypsy and Traveller Sites](#), in November 2004.³⁰ The Committee expressed concern about the

²⁶ Further information on the pilots is provided in the [Letter from the Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government to the Women and Equalities Select Committee, regarding evidence session on the inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), dated 22 January 2019

²⁷ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), HC 360 2017-19, 5 April 2019, para 44

²⁸ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), HC 360 2017-19, 5 April 2019

²⁹ ‘Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities ‘comprehensively failed’ by policy makers’ *Women and Equalities Committee press notice*, 5 April 2019

³⁰ House of Commons ODPM: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee, [Gypsy and Traveller Sites](#), HC 633-I 2003-04, 8 November 2004

lack of authorised sites and stopping places available to Gypsies and Travellers, and called on the Government to “provide a statutory framework, political leadership and capital funding” to tackle the problem.³¹

The [Government's response](#) to the Select Committee's recommendations, published in January 2005, outlined the measures the Government was taking to increase site provision at that time.³²

2.5 UK National Roma Integration Strategy

In April 2011 the European Commission published [An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020](#),³³ which called on Member States to adopt National Roma Integration Strategies to meet four key EU Roma Integration goals: access to education, employment, healthcare and housing. The Commission proposed that strategies include “targeted actions and sufficient funding (national, EU and other) to deliver” the goals. All EU Member States have adopted National Roma Integration Strategies or integrated sets of policy measures based on this Framework, and the Commission annually assesses progress.

The UK has published a [document](#) setting out the legal framework in the UK in respect of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers, and the policies adopted in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland within broader social inclusion and integration strategies.³⁴

The European Commission’s 2016 assessment of the UK’s progress in implementing the EU Framework concluded:

The mainstream approaches have not demonstrated sufficient impact on improving the situation of Roma. Targeted measures could be further exploited by also using the existing possibilities under the ESIF funds [European Structural and Investment Funds]. Scaling up the existing initiatives implemented throughout the UK should also be explored.

Cooperation between national and local authorities needs to be addressed, as well as the involvement of Roma in the design, implementation and monitoring of relevant measures. Evidence gathering should also be developed to enable the assessment of the impact of the measures.³⁵

³¹ Ibid, p68

³² HM Government, [Government Response to ODPM Select Committee Report on Gypsy & Travellers Sites](#), Cm 6465, January 2005

³³ European Commission, [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020](#), COM(2011) 173 final, 5 April 2011

³⁴ European Commission Website, [UK National Strategy for Roma Integration](#) [Accessed 27 April 2018]

³⁵ European Commission, [Assessing the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Council Recommendation on Effective Roma integration measures in the Member States – 2016](#), COM (2016) 424, 27 June 2016

The [fifth monitoring report on the UK by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance](#), published in October 2016, recommended that the UK develop a comprehensive integration strategy to address the inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers:

ECRI strongly recommends that the authorities draw up, in consultation with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma groups, a detailed programme of integration strategies and measures to address the disadvantage suffered by all three of these communities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, including concrete targets, timeframes, and resources, in all areas of daily life, such as education, employment, health care and accommodation, in particular addressing the shortage of caravan sites.³⁶

A [Civil Society Monitoring report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy in the UK in 2012 and 2013](#) found that Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities experienced significant inequalities across the UK. The report was critical of the “exceptionally slow” progress on Roma integration in the UK, concluding that:

A detailed programme of integration strategies and measures is urgently required for the whole of the UK, as identified by the EU Roma Integration Strategy (including action plan, timeframes, resources and addressing the explicit needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women and children).³⁷

The report recommended a number of short and long-term actions for UK Administrations and other stakeholders in order to address structural factors, discrimination, and inequalities in education, employment and welfare, health, and accommodation.

When asked, via a written Parliamentary Question, “what mechanisms will be in place after Brexit to take the place of the EU Roma Integration Strategy to improve the life outcomes of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma?” the Government responded:

As the Prime Minister has said, to leave the EU does not mark an ending. It marks a new beginning for the UK and our relationship with our European allies. We will continue to advance Roma integration within broader social inclusion and integration policies, and champion race equality at international level in a wide range of settings, collaborating with the Council of Europe and the United Nation. This invites views on the Government’s vision for building strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. We encourage

³⁶ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, [ECRI Report on the United Kingdom \(fifth monitoring cycle\)](#), 4 October 2016

³⁷ Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation, [Civil Society Monitoring report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy in the UK in 2012 and 2013](#), prepared by the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, Andrew Ryder (Corvinus University Budapest, Third Sector Research Centre – University of Birmingham) and Sarah Cemlyn (The Centre for Poverty and Social Justice, University of Bristol), 2014, p13

all groups, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, to engage with the Green Paper.³⁸

The Government published [Integrated Communities Strategy: summary of consultation responses and government response](#) together with an [Integrated Communities Action Plan](#) on 9 February 2019. The Plan includes an ongoing Government action to “continue to take steps to address the disparities that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities can encounter and which can serve to act as barriers to integration, building on learning from the six projects we funded in 2018”.³⁹

2.6 UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the [International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination \(UN ICERD\)](#) by its State parties. All States parties are obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee. The Committee examines each report and addresses its concerns and recommendations to the State party in the form of “concluding observations”.

The Committee’s concluding observations in 2016 on the periodic reports of the UK noted that Gypsies, Travellers and Roma continued to face exclusion and discrimination, and were subject to negative stereotypes and stigmatisation in the media. The Committee recommended that the Government:

Develop a comprehensive strategy, in consultation with members of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, to ensure a systematic and coherent approach in addressing the challenges that members of these communities continue to face in the fields of health, education, housing and employment, and ensure its effective implementation by adopting specific action plans, putting in place effective oversight and monitoring mechanisms to track progress, and providing adequate human and financial resources.⁴⁰

³⁸ [HL6728 \[Travellers: Equality\], 5 April 2018](#)

³⁹ HM Government, [Integrated Communities Action Plan](#), February 2019, p20

⁴⁰ UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the combined twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#), CERD/C/GBR/CO/21-23, 3 October 2016

3. Racial discrimination

3.1 The Equality Act 2010

The [Equality Act 2010](#) prohibits discrimination, harassment and victimisation against persons with “protected characteristics”. Race is a protected characteristic.⁴¹ Some Gypsy and Traveller groups are protected by the Act’s prohibition against race discrimination.

In *Moore & Anor v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2015] EWHC 44, the High Court noted that:

by virtue of section 9(4) of Equality Act 2010, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, each a distinct racial group, form a racial group for the purposes of section 9 of the Act.⁴²

In fact, Romany Gypsies,⁴³ Scottish Travellers⁴⁴ and Irish Travellers⁴⁵ have all been declared by the courts to be protected as “races” under the *Equality Act 2010*. However, at least two Traveller groups fall outside of these definitions and may therefore not be protected against discrimination: showpeople and New (or New Age) Travellers.

Roma are also an ‘ethnic group’ in terms of the law, and therefore protected by equality legislation. The word Roma is used as an umbrella term for several distinct ethnic groups of people, including Roma, Manouche, and Sinti, among others.

In addition to the Act’s prohibition of discrimination, [section 149](#) of the Act provides that public authorities are, in the exercise of their functions, required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons with protected characteristics and those that do not share them. As such, where exercising relevant functions (e.g. planning decisions), public authorities are required to have due regard to this duty.⁴⁶

3.2 Gypsies’ and Travellers’ experiences

A number of studies have reported that Gypsies and Travellers continue to face high levels of racial discrimination, contributing to and exacerbating the inequalities they experience.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Equality Act 2010, ss.4 & 9

⁴² Para 58

⁴³ *CRE v Dutton* [1983] 2 AC 548

⁴⁴ *McClellan v Gypsy Traveller Education Information Project* (2008) 23 June, unreported (case no. S/132721/07)

⁴⁵ *P O’Leary and others v Allied Domecq and others* (2000) 29 August, unreported, Central London County Court, HHJ Goldstein.

⁴⁶ For further information on the equality duty, see Commons Library briefing paper: [The Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Impact Assessments](#) (SN06591)

⁴⁷ See for example: Anglia Ruskin University, [Gypsy, Traveller and Roma: Experts by Experience](#), October 2014; The Traveller Movement, [Gypsies and Travellers: Community, Equality and Discrimination](#), June 2015; and The Traveller Movement,

A research report on the [Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller Communities](#), published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in 2009, concluded that:

Racism towards most ethnic minority groups is now hidden, less frequently expressed in public, and widely seen as unacceptable. However, that towards Gypsies and Travellers is still common, frequently overt and seen as justified. Abusive media coverage and overtly racist statements from local and national politicians add to the ignorance and prejudice of many members of the settled population, while those in authority frequently fail to challenge them. Complaints abound from members of the communities included in this review: of services being not welcoming or refused; of employment offers being withdrawn; and of people being harassed in or dismissed from employment...⁴⁸

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's [Is England Fairer? spotlight report on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma](#) (March 2016) concluded that prejudicial attitudes towards Gypsy and Traveller communities are still widely held. The following examples were highlighted:

- According to the Spring 2014 Global Attitudes survey, 50% of people in Britain reported having an unfavourable view of Roma (Pew Research Centre, 2014).
- Discrimination and harassment of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers was common across Britain, not only on the part of the general public but also by the police and other authorities (Lane, Spencer and Jones, 2014).
- Evidence from a study carried out in Devon found that some people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities had hidden their ethnic identity in order to access employment and services, and others said their children were bullied at school and that they had been refused entry to pubs and cinemas (Devon and Cornwall Police, 2013).
- Britain has failed to make progress on all of the measures aimed at fighting discrimination that are part of the European Commission's Framework for National Roma Integration (EC, 2013).⁴⁹

The British media has also been criticised for depicting and reinforcing negative stereotypes of Gypsies and Travellers.⁵⁰

[Discrimination experienced by Gypsies, Travellers and Roma: results from 2016 survey](#), 2016

⁴⁸ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Research Report 12: Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller Communities - A Review](#), S. Cemlyn, M. Greenfields, S. Burnett, Z. Matthews and C. Whitwell, 1 February 2009, Executive Summary, p5

⁴⁹ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Is England Fairer? Spotlight Report: The experience of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in England](#), March 2016

⁵⁰ See for example: London Gypsies and Travellers, [Video: Gypsies and Travellers in the Media](#) [Accessed 3 May 2018]; and Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Is England Fairer? Spotlight Report: The experience of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in England](#), March 2016

More recently, on 13 September 2017, The Traveller Movement published a report entitled [The last acceptable form of racism?](#), which outlined the results of their research into Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people's experience of prejudice and discrimination in areas such as education, employment, healthcare and access to services. The research, based on an online survey of 214 community members from across the UK, found that:

- **4 out of 5 (77%) of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have experienced hate speech or a hate crime.** This ranged from regularly being subject to racist abuse in public to physical assaults.
- Despite the experience of prejudice being so common for Gypsies, Roma and Traveller (GRT) **only 1 out of 5 (13%) sought help.** GRT people said they felt the police or legal professionals would not help them so saw seeking help "pointless".
- **Half of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people have experienced discrimination in the workplace.** This ranged from being fired once the company learned of their heritage to colleagues refusing to work with them because of their ethnicity.
- The dominant coping mechanism **Gypsies, Roma and Travellers used when trying to avoid racism was to try and hide their ethnicity** (77% said they regularly attempted to hide their ethnicity).
- **70% of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers said they had experienced prejudice in education,** with teachers being mentioned most frequently in the context of perpetuating stereotypes and overlooking bullying and racism.⁵¹

The report made a number of recommendations to address the discrimination experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities, including "Development of resources and funding streams to support GRT NGOs [Non-Governmental Organisations] and groups to assist GRT communities to challenge and engage on these issues".⁵²

3.3 House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee

The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee's [inquiry on Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#) (5 April 2019) heard evidence of discrimination in public services and put forward several recommendations, including:

⁵¹ The Traveller Movement, [The last acceptable form of racism? The pervasive discrimination and prejudice experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), 13 September 2017

⁵² Ibid., p.8

- Public services should be reminded of their duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Senior leaders in all public service bodies should be trained in the Public Sector Equality Duty and each body should have a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller “champion”.
- The Government should work with community organisations to train Gypsy, Roma and Traveller individuals to understand their rights, identify discrimination and to give them the tools to take legal action to challenge discrimination.⁵³

⁵³ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), HC 360 2017-19, 5 April 2019, paras 136-150

4. Hate crime

4.1 What is hate crime?

The police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have adopted the following central definition of hate crime:

“any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by a hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.”⁵⁴

There is no single piece of legislation criminalising hate crime in England and Wales. Instead, there are three different ways in which legislation deals specifically with the issue:

- offences under Parts III and IIIA of the [Public Order Act 1986](#) of stirring up hatred on the grounds of race, religion or sexual orientation;
- aggravated offences under the [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#), where perpetrators of specified “basic” criminal offences (including assault, criminal damage, public order offences and harassment) can be charged with an aggravated form of the offence (carrying a longer maximum sentence) if they demonstrated or were motivated by hostility on the basis of race or religion; and
- provisions for enhanced sentencing under the [Criminal Justice Act 2003](#) where a crime is motivated by race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity.

4.2 How does the legislation apply to Gypsies and Travellers?

As discussed in section 3.1 of this briefing paper, courts have held Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers to be an ethnic racial group. Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Guidance makes this clear in relation to the definition of a racial group for the purpose of aggravated offences under the [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#):

The definition is wide and victims may come within the definition under more than one of the references. Gypsies and some travellers, refugees or asylum seekers or others from less visible minorities would be included within this definition. While Romany gypsies have long been recognised as a ethnic racial group (*Commission for Racial Equality v Dutton* [1989] QB 783), in more recent times and certainly since the first instance discrimination case of *O’Leary v Punch Retail* (HHJ Goldstein, Westminster County Court, 29 August 2000), Irish Travellers have also been

⁵⁴ CPS, [Hate Crime Report: 2014/2015 and 2015/2016](#), July 2016, p6

considered an ethnic racial group. Whilst this has not been considered by an appellate criminal court, the O'Leary case is regarded as being persuasive if the point is ever taken.⁵⁵

The College of Policing's operational guidance on hate crime discusses the application of this case law to the legislation more widely, and also looks at barriers to reporting hate crime:

Gypsies and Travellers can experience difficulties in reporting hate crime, contributing to significant levels of under-reporting. This can be attributed, in part, to a historically poor level of positive, cooperative engagement with the police. Inadequate or insensitive police responses when such a crime is reported may also be a factor.

Effective investigation of reported hate crimes, and ongoing and proactive community engagement will help to generate confidence in the police service among Gypsy and Traveller communities. This should then encourage improved levels of reporting.⁵⁶

The guidance states that all reports of hate crime made by Gypsies and Travellers should be flagged on command and control and intelligence systems, so that trends can be easily identified and the performance of police service delivery assessed.⁵⁷

4.3 Government action

In July 2016, the Government published a plan to deal with hate crime until May 2020, setting out actions to:

- Prevent and respond to hate crime.
- Increase reporting of hate crime incidents.
- Improve support for victims.
- Build an understanding of hate crime.⁵⁸

In January 2017 the Communities Secretary, then Sajid Javid, announced £375,000 of new funding to further encourage the reporting and prevention of hate crime.⁵⁹ The [Traveller Movement](#) was one of the organisations receiving funding from the package. In partnership with other organisations, the Traveller Movement launched a campaign, [Operation Report Hate](#), aimed at raising awareness within the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities about hate crimes and the need to report them.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has also worked with the police to create a dedicated reporting page

⁵⁵ CPS [Racist and religious crime – CPS guidance](#)

⁵⁶ College of Policing, [Hate Crime Operational Guidance](#), 2014, p31

⁵⁷ Ibid, p32

⁵⁸ Home Office, [Action against hate: the UK government's plan for tackling hate crime](#), July 2016

⁵⁹ ['New hate crime package to target groups at need'](#), Department for Communities and Local Government Press Notice, 26 January 2017

tailored for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities on their hate crime reporting portal True Vision. It has also funded a dedicated third party reporting website run by GATE Herts.⁶⁰

In October 2018 the Government published an update on its plan for tackling hate crime.⁶¹ The update included the following commitments:

- The National Police Chiefs' Council will refresh the True Vision reporting website this year, with support from the Home Office, to maximise new technologies to further improve user experience of the site. (page 16)
- We are also aware that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities face a number of challenges, including reporting hate crimes to the police, and we will be funding projects supporting these communities to respond effectively to hate crime. (page 18)

The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee's [inquiry on Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#) (5 April 2019) recommended that:

The Home Office should work with GATE Herts, with a view to creating more physical reporting sites, and should train community organisations to encourage Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people to report hate crime when it occurs.⁶²

⁶⁰ [PQ 133417 \[Hate Crime: Travellers\] 26 March 2018](#)

⁶¹ HM Government, [Action against hate, the UK government's plan for tackling hate crime – 'two years on'](#), 16 October 2018

⁶² House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), HC 360 2017-19, 5 April 2019, para 157

5. Accommodation

Accommodation issues contribute to many of the inequalities that Gypsy and Traveller communities experience, and are frequently a source of tensions between travelling and settled communities.

5.1 Accommodation type and tenure

Although Gypsies and Travellers generally see travelling as part of their identity, they can choose to live in different ways, including:

- moving regularly around the country from site to site and being 'on the road'
- living permanently in caravans or mobile homes, on sites provided by the council, or on private sites
- living in settled accommodation during winter or school term-time, travelling during the summer months
- living in 'bricks and mortar' housing, settled together, but still retaining a strong commitment to Gypsy/Traveller culture and traditions.⁶³

The 2011 Census found that the majority (76%) of Gypsies and Irish Travellers in England and Wales lived in conventional bricks-and-mortar accommodation (house, bungalow, flat etc). This compared to 99% of the population as a whole. 24% of Gypsies and Travellers in England and Wales lived in a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure.⁶⁴

Fewer Gypsies and Irish Travellers owned or share-owned their accommodation (34%), compared to 66% of the population of England and Wales as a whole. 41% of Gypsies and Irish Travellers lived in social rented accommodation, a significantly higher proportion than the average for all residents in England and Wales of 16%.

A lack of suitable, authorised Traveller sites is often cited as a key reason for Gypsy and Traveller households moving into conventional bricks-and-mortar accommodation.⁶⁵ However, some households may decide to give up a mobile lifestyle (temporarily or permanently) for other reasons, for example because of support needs relating to health or education.

Shelter's [Good practice briefing on Gypsies and Travellers](#) (2007) provides an overview of some of the difficulties settled Gypsies and Travellers can face in accessing suitable housing and sustaining tenancies, including: invisibility, discrimination, distrust of public

⁶³ The Traveller Movement webpage, [Gypsy Roma Traveller History and Culture](#) [Accessed 23 April 2019]

⁶⁴ Office for National Statistics, [2011 Census analysis: What does the 2011 Census tell us about the characteristics of Gypsy or Irish Travellers in England and Wales?](#) Statistical Release, 21 January 2014

⁶⁵ The Traveller Movement webpage, [Our Background](#), 6 September 2015

authorities, low levels of literacy, isolation from family support networks, and neighbourhood tensions.⁶⁶

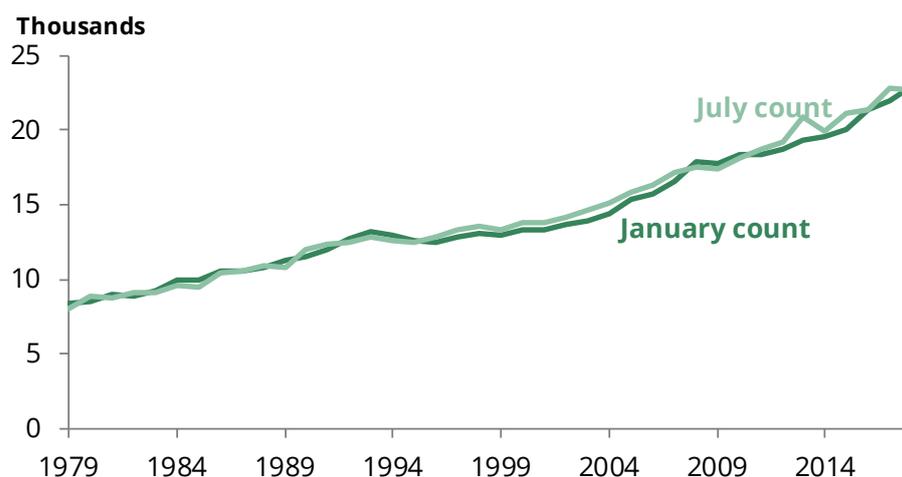
Number of Traveller caravans

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) publishes official statistics on the number of Traveller caravans⁶⁷ on both authorised and unauthorised sites in England. Local authorities carry out the count of caravans on Traveller sites twice a year, in January and July, providing a snapshot of the number of caravans on the day of the count. The count is carried out to provide local data on the number and the seasonal movement of caravans; it does not cover the number of occupants residing in the caravans.

At the time of the July 2018 count, the total number of Traveller caravans in England was 22,662. This is an increase of 29% since July 2008, but a decrease of 1% on July 2017. The chart below illustrates the increase in the number of Traveller caravans from January 1979 to July 2018.

THE NUMBER OF TRAVELLER CARAVANS IN ENGLAND HAS GONE UP

Number of Traveller Caravans, England 1979-2018



Source: MHCLG, [Traveller caravan count: July 2018](#), Live Table 4

5.2 Traveller sites

Types of sites

In July 2018, 29% of Traveller caravans were on public sites;⁶⁸ 57% were on privately funded sites; 9% were in unauthorised developments on land owned by travellers; and 4% were in unauthorised

⁶⁶ Shelter, [Good Practice Briefing: Gypsies and Travellers](#), February 2007

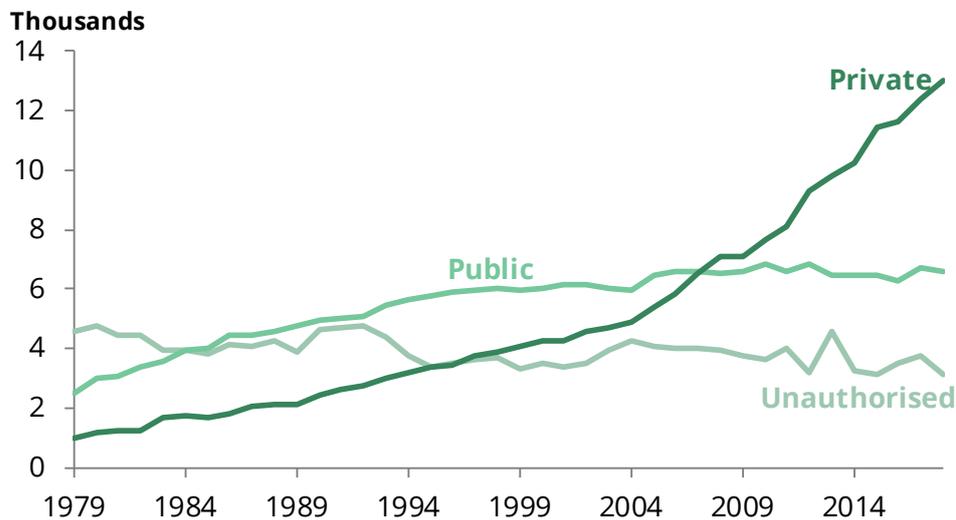
⁶⁷ The count includes caravans lived in by traditional and ethnic Gypsies and Travellers as well as members of the non-traditional New Traveller groups.

⁶⁸ Operated by local authorities and private registered providers of social housing, including housing associations, trusts and cooperatives.

encampments on land not owned by travellers.⁶⁹ 268 sites were recorded as being operated by local authority and private registered providers of social housing, down from 315 in July 2017.⁷⁰

MOST TRAVELLER CARAVANS IN ENGLAND ARE ON PRIVATE SITES

Number of Traveller Caravans in England by type of site



Source: MHCLG, [Traveller caravan count: July 2018](#), Live Table 4

Caravans on authorised private sites have formed a growing proportion of the total number of caravans over the last ten years, increasing from 40% in July 2008 to 57% in July 2018. The proportion of caravans on all authorised sites (including public sites) has risen from 78% in July 2008 to 86% in July 2018.

Site residents' rights and responsibilities

In April 2011 the Coalition Government extended the *Mobile Homes Act 1983* to local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites in England. This gave residents of these sites greater protection against eviction and brought their rights and responsibilities in line with those of residents of other residential mobile home sites. The *Mobile Homes Act 2013* further strengthened the protection offered to mobile home owners on authorised sites in England.

The Commons Library briefing paper [Mobile \(park\) homes](#) (SN01080) provides an overview of the rights of residents who live year-round on mobile home parks.

Environmental conditions on sites

A number of studies have raised concerns about environmental conditions on some Traveller sites, including: the poor location of sites (for example, under motorways, next to sewage works or on poor quality land); health hazards (such as contamination by vermin); decayed

⁶⁹ MHCLG, [Count of Traveller caravans: July 2018](#), 16 January 2018, p3

⁷⁰ MHCLG, [Count of Traveller caravans: July 2017](#) and [Count of Traveller caravans: July 2018](#), Live Table 2

sewage and water fittings; poor-quality utility rooms; and failings in fire safety.⁷¹

A research report published by the National Inclusion Health Board (NIHB) in January 2016 on the [Impact of insecure accommodation and the living environment on Gypsies' and Travellers' health](#) also highlighted concerns about poor living environments on some Traveller sites and their negative impact on health outcomes. The report made a number of recommendations intended to improve living conditions and called for a coordinated response across local and national government.⁷²

De Montfort University, and Joseph Rowntree Foundation conducted a research study of site management and delivery for Gypsies and Travellers in England between September 2014 and July 2016. The study, published by the Chartered Institute of Housing, found a "range in quality and style of social site management". The research report - [Managing and delivering Gypsy and Traveller sites: negotiating conflict \(2016\)](#) – provides guidance on the key factors for effective site management, together with examples of good practice.⁷³

The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee [inquiry into Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#) highlighted significant concerns about the quality of some sites and recommended that local authorities should act to improve standards:

Local authorities should inspect every existing private Traveller site in their area to map which have access to a minimum standard of basic amenities and which do not. For those that do not, local authorities should place conditions upon the license to ensure that these measures are put in place or consider revoking licenses that do not comply with these conditions. This solution does not address the problem that arises when it is the local authority itself that owns the site. For this, we recommend that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government explore methods by which local authorities can be held to account for their own sites.⁷⁴

5.3 Assessment of Gypsy and Traveller housing needs

The periodical review of housing needs under section 8 of the *Housing Act 1985* is a statutory requirement on local authorities. This requires

⁷¹ See: Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Research report 12: Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities - A review](#), S. Cemlyn, M. Greenfields, S. Burnett, Z. Matthews and C. Whitwell, 1 February 2009, p9

⁷² Department of Health National Inclusion Health Board, [Impact of insecure accommodation and the living environment on Gypsies' and Travellers' health](#), 8 January 2016

⁷³ Chartered Institute of Housing, [Managing and delivering Gypsy and Traveller sites: negotiating conflict](#) by De Montfort University, and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, December 2016

⁷⁴ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), HC 360 2017–19, 5 April 2019, para 111

local authorities to assess and understand the accommodation needs of people residing or resorting to their district. Local authorities should then consider how to meet the accommodation needs identified in the assessment.

Section 124 of the *Housing and Planning Act 2016* removed section 225 of the *Housing Act 2004* which required local authorities to carry out a specific assessment of Gypsies and Traveller housing needs when completing their housing needs assessments. Section 124 also amended Section 8 of the *Housing Act 1985* to make it clear that the duty includes consideration of the needs of people residing in, or resorting to the district for, caravan sites and houseboat mooring sites.

The 2015 Conservative Government emphasised that local authorities would still need to assess the housing needs of everyone in their communities, including Gypsies and Travellers.⁷⁵ The Government published [Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance](#) for local authorities in March 2016. The Government has committed to finalising the 2016 draft guidance on assessing housing need.⁷⁶

5.4 Homelessness legislation

Part 7 of the *Housing Act 1996* (as amended) provides the statutory under-pinning for action to tackle homelessness. Local authorities have a duty under the legislation to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households who fall into a 'priority need' category. The *Homelessness Reduction Act 2017* places new duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'.⁷⁷

The charity Shelter provides information for [Homeless Gypsies and Travellers](#) who may find themselves with nowhere safe and permanent to live.

Under the *Homelessness Act 2002* local authorities must have a strategy for preventing homelessness in their district. The statutory [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#) states that:

Housing authorities are reminded that when drawing up their homelessness strategies for preventing and reducing homelessness, they must consider the needs of all groups of people in their district who are homeless or likely to become homeless, including Gypsies and Travellers...⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Public Bill Committee, 26 November 2015, [c345](#)

⁷⁶ MHCLG, [Government response to the consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments, February 2019](#), p36

⁷⁷ See Commons Library briefing paper: [Statutory Homelessness in England](#) (SN01164)

⁷⁸ MHCLG, [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities](#), last updated April 2019, para 2.16

6. Planning

6.1 Planning policy

The Government's planning policies and requirements for Gypsy and Traveller sites are set out in the [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#).⁷⁹ It accompanied the March 2012 [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (which (as discussed later) was revised and updated in 2018).

The **Planning Policy for Traveller Sites must be taken into consideration in preparing local plans and taking planning decisions**. It encourages local authorities to formulate their own evidence base for Gypsy and Traveller needs and to provide their own targets relating to pitches required.

Specifically, the planning policy directs:

9. Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities.

10. Local planning authorities should, in producing their Local Plan:

- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets
- b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15
- c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints across its area (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries)
- d) relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density
- e) protect local amenity and environment⁸⁰

In a [January 2014 Written Ministerial Statement](#), the Coalition Government sought to re-emphasise policy at that time that unmet need was unlikely to outweigh harm to the Green Belt and other harm

The House of Commons Library briefing (SN07005) [Gypsies and travellers: planning provisions](#) offers more information on relevant policy, including changes made by the Coalition Government

⁷⁹ The [Annex to the policy](#) defines "gypsies and travellers" as "Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such".

⁸⁰ MHCLG, [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#), updated 31 August 2015

to constitute the “very special circumstances” to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.⁸¹

Concerns continue to be expressed, though, about the provision of sites and unauthorised encampments. In his [debate on gypsies and travellers on 10 September 2018](#), Andrew Selous set out his concerns about current planning policy, suggesting that “a planning policy of segregation and separation [made] integration and community cohesion hard to achieve” and produced “terrible outcomes for settled residents and Travellers”.⁸² In reply, the Housing Minister, Kit Malthouse, outlined the planning policy requirements:

The fourth area that my hon. Friend raised was planning policy. He described the imbalance between the number of sites in some areas compared with others, particularly in his county. The Government’s planning policy for Traveller sites confirms that our aims include that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning and, working together with neighbouring authorities, identify land for sites. Local planning authorities should consider the production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis to provide more flexibility in identifying sites. The policy is clear that local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community. In exceptional cases when a local planning authority is burdened by a large-scale unauthorised site that has significantly increased its need, and where the area is subject to strict and special planning constraints, there is no assumption that the authority has to plan to meet its Traveller site needs in full.⁸³

More recently, in answer to a [PQ in April 2019](#), the junior housing minister, Heather Wheeler, reiterated that “all local planning authorities should identify the need for traveller sites and ensure that appropriate provision is made for the travelling community.”⁸⁴

Definition of Traveller for planning policy

In September 2014, the Coalition Government published [a consultation on planning and travellers](#), which proposed to change the definition of “Traveller” for planning related purposes, to exclude those who had permanently ceased from travelling.⁸⁵ This change came into force from August 2015 following the issue of a revised version of the [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#).

The Traveller Movement reaction

In 2015, the Traveller Movement expressed concern that the changes to planning policy for Traveller sites would exacerbate problems around unauthorised sites, lack of site provision and community tensions:

The Traveller Movement believe that the new measures will do the opposite and make it significantly harder for Gypsies and Travellers to obtain planning permission, adding to the existing

⁸¹ [HC Deb 17 January 2014 c35WS](#)

⁸² [HC Deb 10 September 2018 cc566-9](#)

⁸³ [HC Deb 10 September 2018 cc575-80](#)

⁸⁴ [PQ 242264, 11 April 2019](#)

⁸⁵ HM Government, [Consultation: planning and travellers](#), 14 September 2014

chronic shortage of Traveller sites in England. We expect this in turn to result in many community members being forced onto the road, increasing numbers of unauthorised sites and damaging community cohesion; all issues which the new guidance apparently aims to improve. At the heart of these changes lies a deep misunderstanding of the culture and lives of England's Gypsies and Travellers and a failure by Government to meaningfully recognise their ethnic minority status in the planning system.⁸⁶

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) was first published in 2012.⁸⁷ Following a consultation, it was [revised and updated in July 2018](#), with some further minor amendment in February 2019.⁸⁸

The consultation on the draft revised NPPF was launched in March and closed in May 2018. [Announcing the consultation](#), the Communities Secretary, then Sajid Javid, set out how the revised NPPF would (he argued) enable the delivery of the right homes in the right places, tackle the housing crisis and improve the prospects of people and of the country.⁸⁹ The Government published a [draft revised text](#)⁹⁰ and also a [consultation proposals](#) document, setting out why and how the NPPF was being changed.

The [draft text for consultation](#) added Travellers who do not meet the definition within the Traveller planning policy to the list of those groups whose need for homes should be identified:

61. In determining the minimum number of homes needed, strategic plans should be based upon a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless there are exceptional circumstances that justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In establishing this figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account.

62. Within this context, policies should identify the size, type and tenure of homes required for different groups in the community (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).⁹¹

⁸⁶ The Traveller Movement, [Government changes to Planning Policy for Traveller sites](#), September 2015

⁸⁷ MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), July 2012

⁸⁸ MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), CP 48, February 2019

⁸⁹ [HC Deb 5 March 2018 c56 onwards](#)

⁹⁰ MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework: Draft text for consultation](#), March 2018

⁹¹ MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework: Draft text for consultation](#), March 2018: p17

The consultation also asked whether any changes should be made to the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites as a result of the proposed changes to the Framework and, if so, what changes should be made.⁹²

The [Government response to the consultation](#) was published with the updated NPPF in July 2018.⁹³ In it, the Government observed that respondents had asked for clarity on a number of policy issues (including the scope of paragraph 62 and how it related to the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites); that some respondents had suggested that for reasons of fairness, clarity and ease of policy application, the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites should be integrated into the NPPF; and some respondents had suggested consequential changes to the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites itself.⁹⁴

The Government was (it said) not persuaded that the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites should be integrated into the NPPF but had amended the NPPF to make clearer how the two policy documents should be read in conjunction and should operate side by side.⁹⁵

Under *delivering a sufficient supply of homes*, the updated NPPF (like its earlier draft version) lists Travellers amongst those groups whose needs should be reflected in planning policies:

61. Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

(...)

Footnote 25: Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers' housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document.⁹⁶

Later, in discussing five-year housing land supply, the NPPF says that "for the avoidance of doubt, a five-year supply of deliverable sites for travellers – as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites – should be assessed separately, in line with the policy in that document".⁹⁷

⁹² MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework: Consultation proposals](#), March 2018: p25

⁹³ MHCLG, [Government response to the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework consultation](#), July 2018

⁹⁴ Ibid., p60

⁹⁵ Ibid., p61

⁹⁶ MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), CP 48, February 2019

⁹⁷ Ibid., footnote 36, p20

6.2 Intentional unauthorised occupation of land

The Coalition Government's 2014 consultation on 'planning and travellers' proposed to make intentional occupation of land without planning permission a material consideration in any retrospective planning application for that site. The document set out:

For the avoidance of doubt, this does not mean that retrospective applications should be automatically refused, but rather failure to seek permission in advance of occupation will count against the application. It will, the Government hopes, encourage all applicants to apply through the proper planning processes before occupying land and carrying out development.⁹⁸

This change in planning policy was introduced by means of a [letter from the Government's Chief Planner](#) to planning officers in England.⁹⁹ It was later reaffirmed in a Written Statement to the House in September 2015.¹⁰⁰

6.3 Recovery of planning appeals in the Green Belt

In July 2013, the then Secretary of State announced that he would temporarily expand, for six months, the criteria for recovery of appeals, to include appeals relating to Traveller sites in the Green Belt:

The Secretary of State wishes to give particular scrutiny to traveller site appeals in the green belt, so that he can consider the extent to which "Planning Policy for Traveller Sites" is meeting this Government's clear policy intentions. To this end he is hereby revising the appeals recovery criteria issued on 30 June 2008 and will consider for recovery appeals involving traveller sites in the green belt.

For the avoidance of doubt, this does not mean that all such appeals will be recovered, but that the Secretary of State will likely recover a number of appeals in order to test the relevant policies at national level. The Secretary of State will apply this criteria for a period of six months, after which it will be reviewed.¹⁰¹

The [Written Statement in January 2014](#) also confirmed that the Secretary of State would continue to recover more planning appeals relating to Traveller sites in Green Belt land for his own determination.¹⁰²

The Secretary of State's decision to recover appeals relating to Traveller sites in the Green Belt was challenged in the High Court in the case of

The recovery of appeals relating to traveller sites in the Green Belt was challenged in the High Court; the case is discussed at more length in the Commons Library briefing [Green Belt](#) (CBP 00934, 4 January 2019) and [Planning appeals](#) (SN 06790, 22 March 2019)

⁹⁸ HM Government, [Consultation: planning and travellers](#), 14 September 2014, section 4.10

⁹⁹ Letter to Chief Planning Officers in England from the Chief Planner, MHCLG, [Green Belt protection and intentional unauthorised development](#), 31 August 2015

¹⁰⁰ [HCWS195, 14 September 2015](#)

¹⁰¹ [HC Deb 1 July 2013 c24WS](#)

¹⁰² [HC Deb 17 January 2014 c35WS](#)

[Moore and Coates v SCLG](#) in January 2015.¹⁰³ Following the judgement by Mr Justice Gilbart, which found that certain aspects of this policy were contrary to provisions in the *Equality Act 2010* and the European Convention of Human Rights, [the Government decided](#) to “de-recover” a number of outstanding appeals.¹⁰⁴

In an [August 2015 letter to Chief Planning Officers in England](#), the Government set out its intention to have the Planning Inspectorate monitor appeals involving unauthorised development in the Green Belt. It also said that the Secretary of State would recover a “proportion of relevant appeals in the Green Belt”.¹⁰⁵

6.4 Planning enforcement

One area of continuing concern has been the enforcement of planning breaches. It has been suggested that local authorities are not making best use of the planning enforcement powers available to them.

The [Government’s 2018 consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments](#) sought views on whether there are any specific barriers which prevent the effective use of current powers for dealing with unauthorised development.

The consultation findings and the Government’s response are discussed in sections 7.3 and 7.4 of this briefing paper.

6.5 Traveller site provision

As outlined in section 6.1, responsibility for planning for the provision of sufficient Gypsy and Traveller sites in England lies with local authorities, who are best placed to assess the needs of their communities.

The Coalition Government put in place a package of financial incentives and other support for local authorities to encourage the appropriate development of Traveller sites. Measures included:

- £60 million Traveller Pitch Funding to 2015, as part of the Affordable Homes Programme, to provide new or refurbished Traveller sites in England.¹⁰⁶
- A financial incentive to local authorities, through the New Homes Bonus, for the development of authorised Traveller site accommodation.¹⁰⁷
- Promoting good practice examples of positive engagement between service providers and Gypsies and Travellers.

¹⁰³ [2015] EWHC 44 (Admin)

¹⁰⁴ [HL5936, 23 March 2015](#)

¹⁰⁵ Letter to Chief Planning Officers in England from the Chief Planner, MHCLG, [Green Belt protection and intentional unauthorised development](#), 31 August 2015

¹⁰⁶ The Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme is administered by Homes England (which replaced the Homes and Communities Agency in January 2018).

¹⁰⁷ See the House of Commons Library briefing paper SN05724: [The New Homes Bonus Scheme \(England\)](#) for further information.

- Training to support councillors with their leadership role around Traveller site provision, including advice on dealing with the controversy that can sometimes accompany planning applications for Traveller sites.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, the current Government confirmed in February 2018 that grant funding for new Traveller pitches is available through the [Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21](#).¹⁰⁹

In a written submission to the House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) reported progress on delivering new Traveller pitches:

Between 2011 and March 2015, the Homes and Communities Agency spent over £43 million delivering more than 500 new pitches and refurbishing and nearly 400 more refurbished pitches [sic], through the Traveller Pitch Funding programme. In addition, under the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme, allocations were agreed for 68 new pitches with £4.9m funding.¹¹⁰

As part of the MHCLG official count of Traveller caravans, local authorities are required to submit data on the number of new affordable rental pitches constructed since the previous year's count. The latest statistics show that, altogether, local authorities reported that 44 such pitches on socially-rented sites and zero such pitches on privately-funded sites had been created between July 2017 and July 2018.¹¹¹

However, **it is widely acknowledged that there is a national shortage of suitable permanent and transit Traveller sites.** A [2016 report by De Montfort University and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#), published by the Chartered Institute of Housing, spoke of a "long-term policy and practice failure":

There has been a long-term policy and practice failure to deliver and manage Gypsy and Traveller sites in the UK. The resulting shortage of sites manifests itself in unauthorised encampments, weakened community cohesion and expenditure on clearing up and eviction.

More importantly these protected ethnic groups face poorer health, education and employment outcomes and feel marginalised in society. A mutually beneficial outcome would result from appropriate levels of site provision to meet needs.

Good quality sites are provided in some areas, but historically a number of councils have ignored the strategic issue and only use reactive enforcement measures against encampments. In other

¹⁰⁸ MHCLG, [Reducing Inequalities for Gypsies and Travellers: Progress Report](#), 4 April 2012, Chapter 4

¹⁰⁹ [PQ 127503, 22 February 2018](#)

¹¹⁰ House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee, Inquiry into Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, [Written submission from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(GRT0003\)](#), 2 May 2018

¹¹¹ MHCLG, [Count of Traveller caravans: July 2018](#), 16 January 2018, p8

areas there may be sites, but they are so poorly managed that they are expensive and unsustainable.

National policy and legislation has also not provided the impetus to deliver sufficient sites and is often not enforced...¹¹²

The report also outlined some of the challenges in turning evidenced need for accommodation into sites identified in Local Plans, and then from plans into accommodation on the ground:

- Identifying and acquiring appropriate land within the planning authority area, either by using council land in preference to other uses, particularly private sector housing development, or acquiring other public sector or private land.
- Obtaining planning permission and overcoming local objections. There are examples of councils turning down their own applications for sites, or including conditions that add expense and delay to site delivery. In some cases councillors do not lead positively to allay residents' concerns.
- Cost of decontaminating and/or preparing sites. Many identified sites or their surroundings require land decontamination from previous uses, or need significant work to protect against flooding.
- Expense of contracts and funding mechanisms. Contractors may submit tenders that are higher than for mainstream housing, sometimes under the apprehension that for safety reasons they need more labour. Lenders are not universally attracted to sites as a housing product so there can be difficulty in securing loans to top up HCA funding.¹¹³

The advocacy group Friends Families and Travellers (FFT), using Freedom of Information requests in May and June 2016, undertook research to ascertain whether local authorities in South East England were meeting the requirement to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets. The FFT reported that most local authorities had not identified such a supply:

Only 10 [out of 66] local authorities had identified a 5-year supply of specific deliverable sites.

5 local authorities had no identified need for new sites.

The research found that up to 2033 a total of 1,745 additional pitches are needed in the South East of England.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Chartered Institute of Housing, [Managing and delivering Gypsy and Traveller sites: negotiating conflict](#) by De Montfort University and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, December 2016: page 5

¹¹³ Chartered Institute of Housing, [Managing and delivering Gypsy and Traveller sites: negotiating conflict](#) by De Montfort University and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, December 2016: page 6

¹¹⁴ Friends Families and Travellers, [Research on the five year supply of deliverable Gypsy and Traveller sites in the South East](#), 2016

Similar research carried out by the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups in the East and West Midlands, and by the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit in London, concluded that there had been insufficient progress in identifying a five-year supply of specific deliverable sites to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.¹¹⁵

A [report by FFT](#), published in December 2017, criticised the Government's official statistics on new affordable pitches for being "misleading" as they did not take into account the number of pitches lost as a result of development.

The report concluded that "the government's mechanisms for creating new affordable pitches for Gypsy and Traveller families are not working, despite well-evidenced need and demand" and recommended:

- The government should adopt a definition of a Traveller in planning terms that incorporates all Gypsies and Travellers who need a pitch to live on (for example as proposed in the Draft London Plan).
- The government must re-introduce targets, and a statutory duty to meet the assessed accommodation need of Gypsies and Travellers, as formerly existed under the Caravans Sites Act 1968.
- The government must ring-fence Gypsy and Traveller pitch funding for local authorities to produce socially-rented pitches. This will require improved communication between DCLG, HCA and local authorities.
- The government must begin to accurately record and monitor figures on actual net increase of Gypsy and Traveller pitches.¹¹⁶

6.6 Further measures to increase Traveller site provision

The Government's [consultation](#) on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments (see section 7.3 below), sought views on whether there are any specific barriers to the provision of more authorised permanent and transit sites, and, if so, what could be done to overcome them.¹¹⁷

Local authority consultation responses identified a number of barriers to site provision, including: opposition from local people; a lack of suitable, deliverable, developable land; landowners unwilling for sites to become pitches; competing land uses including other forms of residential development; green belt; and lack of interest by housing associations in delivering sites. Traveller representatives also highlighted local opposition, including from council members and MPs, as a significant

¹¹⁵ The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, [Research into Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Supply](#), 2016

¹¹⁶ Friends, Families and Travellers, [Lack of increase in Affordable Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers in England](#), December 2017, p4

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p20

barrier, alongside other barriers such as: the under-resourcing of local authorities; under-estimation of need; and lack of up-to-date local plans with site provision.¹¹⁸

The Government's consultation response concluded that the current duties and policies are sufficient in terms of setting out what local authorities must do to provide Traveller sites.¹¹⁹

However, in a [written statement to accompany the Government response](#) to the consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised sites, the Secretary of State, James Brokenshire, announced further actions to reinforce local authorities' existing duties to assess and address the likely permanent and transit needs of Travellers in their area, as follows:

- a reiteration of the planning obligations which local authorities already have to make transit sites available and for joint-working between authorities on the setting of pitch and plot targets.
- work to make information on permanent and transit sites freely available in open data format so that local authorities have a single clear source of data on the availability of such sites. This should help to establish which local authorities have an up-to-date plan for travellers in place and are meeting national policy requirements.
- guidance making clear that the Secretary of State will be prepared to review cases where concerns are raised that there is too high a concentration of authorised Traveller sites in one location.¹²⁰
- the Government will consider writing to those authorities that do not have an up-to-date plan for travellers in place, to expedite the requirements of national policy, and highlight examples of good practice.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ MHCLG, [Government response to the consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments: A summary of consultation responses and the way forward](#), 6 February 2019, pp35-36

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p11

¹²⁰ [HCWS1305](#), 6 February 2019

¹²¹ MHCLG, [Government response to the consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments: A summary of consultation responses and the way forward](#), 6 February 2019, p36

7. Unauthorised encampments and developments

7.1 Number of unauthorised Traveller sites

In July 2018, there were 3,093 caravans on unauthorised sites. Of these, 2,149 caravans were on land owned by Travellers and 944 caravans were on land not owned by Travellers.¹²² The number of caravans on unauthorised sites decreased by 17% from July 2017 to July 2018.¹²³ The proportion of Traveller caravans on unauthorised sites has fallen from 22% in July 2008 to 14% in July 2018.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) classifies unauthorised sites as either 'Tolerated' or 'Not Tolerated':

A '*Tolerated*' site is one where the local authority has decided not to seek the removal of the encampment, and where the encampment has been, or is likely to be, allowed to remain for an indefinite period of time.

Some examples of a site which would be classified as '*Not Tolerated*' are where:

- A planning enforcement notice has been served (including Temporary Stop Notices),
- The results of a planning enquiry are pending,
- An injunction has been sought,
- The compliance period has been extended.¹²⁴

According to this classification, in July 2018, 1,368 caravans (44%) were on a tolerated unauthorised site and 1,725 caravans (56%) were on a not tolerated unauthorised site.¹²⁵

7.2 Powers to deal with unauthorised Traveller sites

Unauthorised encampments occur where trespassers enter and occupy land belonging to private landowners or public authorities.

Unauthorised development occurs when land is developed, or there has been a material change of use of land, without the appropriate planning approval being secured in advance.

Unauthorised sites are frequently a source of tensions between the travelling and settled communities. Unauthorised encampments usually lack facilities and services, such as waste disposal, and accommodation insecurity can make it difficult for the travelling community to access

¹²² MHCLG, [Count of Traveller caravans: July 2018](#), 15 November 2018, Table 1, p3

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ MHCLG, [Count of Traveller caravans: July 2018](#), 15 November 2018, p10

¹²⁵ MHCLG, [Count of Traveller caravans: July 2018](#), 15 November 2018, Table 1, p3

public services such as education and health. Unauthorised sites can cause settled communities significant distress. Issues can include:

- trespassing on private land
- occupying public land, including playing fields and children's playgrounds
- damage to property
- extensive litter and waste
- the public and private cost of cleaning or protecting unauthorised sites
- noise and antisocial behaviour
- abusive and threatening behaviour
- carrying out development without planning permission¹²⁶

In March 2015, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Home Office, and Ministry of Justice published a summary of the powers that public bodies have to help them deal with illegal and unauthorised sites: [Dealing with illegal and unauthorised encampments: a summary of available powers](#).¹²⁷

A [joint ministerial letter](#), issued alongside the summary of powers, urged council leaders, police and crime commissioners and police chief constables to make full use of the powers:

It is vital that communities see that the law applies to everyone and they should be confident that local agencies are able to deal effectively with issues such as unauthorised encampments that can cause local concern. We are clear that the response to unauthorised encampments requires a locally driven, multi-agency response, supported by local authorities and the police. There are sufficient powers for local authorities and the police to take action; and Ministers have already reminded local councils of the need to act swiftly to stop unauthorised encampments starting in the first place.

Public bodies should not gold-plate human rights and equalities legislation. Councils and the police have been given strong powers to deal with unauthorised encampments and when deciding whether to take action, they may want to consider for example:

- (a) the harm that such developments can cause to local amenities and the local environment,
- (b) the potential interference with the peaceful enjoyment of neighbouring property,

¹²⁶ MHCLG, Home Office and Ministry of Justice, [Powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments](#), 5 April 2018, p6

¹²⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government, Home Office, and Ministry of Justice, [Dealing with illegal and unauthorised encampments: a summary of available powers](#), 27 March 2015

(c) the need to maintain public order and safety and protect health – for example, by deterring fly-tipping and criminal damage,

(d) any harm to good community relations,

(e) that the state may enforce laws to control the use of an individual's property where that is in accordance with the general public interest.¹²⁸

The Scottish Government has published [Guidance for Local Authorities on Managing Unauthorised Camping by Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland](#).¹²⁹

Negotiated Stopping

'[Negotiated stopping](#)' is an alternative approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments. Under this approach, rather than taking enforcement action to move Gypsies and Travellers on, the local authority identifies appropriate areas where they may stop temporarily by agreement. Through a process of dialogue and negotiation the local authority aims to reach agreement with travelling families over issues such as where they will stay and for how long, acceptable behaviour and use of waste disposal. An evaluation of this approach in Leeds has identified a range of benefits, including: cost savings for the police and local authority, reduced anti-social behaviour, improved community cohesion, and reduced stress and disruption for travelling families.¹³⁰

7.3 Review of powers to deal with unauthorised Traveller sites

In [a House of Commons debate on gypsies and travellers and local communities](#) on 9 October 2017¹³¹ a number of MPs voiced concerns that, in spite of a range of enforcement powers already in place, unauthorised development and encampments remain a significant issue.

In the debate the Minister of State for Communities and Local Government, then Alok Sharma, said that Members' views had been heard "loud and clear". He announced a review of the effectiveness of enforcement against unauthorised development and encampments, but said this was not a reason for local authorities and the police not to use their existing powers:

We want to seek views on whether there is anything we can do to ensure that existing powers can be used more effectively. Let me be clear, however: this is not a signal to local authorities and the police that they should wait for the outcome of such a

¹²⁸ The Department for Communities and Local Government, Home Office, and Ministry of Justice, [Letter to Council Leaders, Police and Crime Commissioners and Police Chief Constables in England on Unauthorised Encampments](#), 26 March 2015

¹²⁹ Scottish Government, [Guidance for Local Authorities on Managing Unauthorised Camping by Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland](#), April 2017

¹³⁰ De Montfort University Leicester, [Negotiated Stopping and ABCD: Excerpt from the final evaluation report](#), 17 July 2017

¹³¹ [HC Deb 9 October 2017](#)

consultation. They have the powers to act, and we expect them to act.¹³²

In April 2018, the Government launched a [consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments](#).¹³³

The consultation, carried out jointly by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Home Office and Ministry of Justice, sought views on what more can be done to ensure local authorities, the police and landowners can deal effectively with unauthorised encampments and developments and if additional powers are required. The consultation ran from 5 April 2018 to 15 June 2018.

The Government published a summary of submissions and its [consultation response](#) on 6 February 2019.¹³⁴ On the same day the Secretary of State for the Home Department made a written ministerial statement on [Enforcement against unauthorised encampments](#)¹³⁵ and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government made a written ministerial statement on [Unauthorised development and encampments](#).¹³⁶

The Government announced a package of measures “to achieve the Government’s overarching aim of fair and equal treatment for travellers, while respecting the interests of the settled community”.¹³⁷ The measures include:

- stronger powers for the police to respond to unauthorised encampments;
- practical and financial support for local authorities to deal with unauthorised encampments;
- support for traveller-site provision; and
- support for the travelling community to improve life chances.¹³⁸

The new measures to strengthen police and local authority powers to deal with unauthorised development and encampments are outlined below. Measures to support the provision of Traveller sites are discussed in section 6.6 of this briefing paper, and those relating more generally to support for Gypsy and Traveller communities are covered in other sections of the paper, in particular section 8 (health) and section 9 (education).

¹³² [HC Deb 9 October 2017 c82](#)

¹³³ MHCLG, Home Office and Ministry of Justice, [Powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments](#), 5 April 2018

¹³⁴ MHCLG, [Government response to the consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments: A summary of consultation responses and the way forward](#), 6 February 2019

¹³⁵ [HCWS1302 6 February 2019](#)

¹³⁶ [HCWS1305 6 February 2019](#)

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ MHCLG, [Government response to the consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments: A summary of consultation responses and the way forward](#), 6 February 2019, p4

7.4 Proposals to strengthen powers to deal with unauthorised Traveller sites

Stronger police powers

The Government's analysis of the consultation responses concluded that:

"The result of the consultation is clear that a narrow majority of respondents want to see police officers given broader powers to deal with trespassers and calls for the Government to take action."¹³⁹

The Government has therefore proposed **four specific amendments to part VI of the [Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994](#)**. These amendments are designed to strengthen police powers to deal with unauthorised encampments. The Government proposes to amend:

- [section 62A](#) of the Act to permit the police to direct trespassers to suitable sites in neighbouring local authorities. Currently, the police can only direct trespassers to sites within the local authority.
- [section 61](#) and 62A to increase the period of time in which trespassers directed from land would be unable to return from three to twelve months.
- section 61 to allow the police to act on encampments where two or more vehicles are present. Currently, encampments have to have six or more vehicles for the police to intervene.
- section 61 to allow the police to remove trespassers from land that forms part of a highway. Currently, the police can only direct trespassers to leave land that forms part of a highway if there is an alternate site in the local authority.¹⁴⁰

The Home Office will launch a further public consultation on these specific measures "soon".¹⁴¹

A narrow majority of consultation respondents were supportive of the Government considering whether to make deliberate trespass a criminal offence rather than a civil one.¹⁴² (This is sometimes referred to as 'the Irish Option' as the Irish Government has criminalised trespass in certain circumstances).¹⁴³ The Government has therefore committed to

¹³⁹ MHCLG, [Government response to the consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments: A summary of consultation responses and the way forward](#), 6 February 2019, p23

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p8 and p9

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p9

¹⁴² Generally speaking, trespass to land is not a criminal offence unless some special statutory provision makes it so. The House of Commons Library briefing paper SN05116: [Trespass to land](#) provides further information.

¹⁴³ For further information on the 'Irish Option' see: MHCLG, Home Office and Ministry of Justice, [Powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments](#), 5 April 2018, pp10-11

conduct a review on the potential criminalisation of unauthorised encampments.¹⁴⁴

Support for local authorities

i) Dealing with unauthorised encampments

Around half of local authorities who responded to the consultation felt that existing powers to deal with unauthorised encampments were adequate, but required further streamlining to be effective.

Approximately one third of local authorities felt existing powers were not effective and needed to be strengthened. Where local authorities called for stronger powers, they usually asked for the power to evict trespassers themselves without recourse to the courts, the power to impound vehicles and the ability to demand that trespassers identify themselves.¹⁴⁵

The Government considers that local authorities may need further support to help them exercise their powers and has therefore committed to:

- provide **new good practice guidance to support local authorities use of powers to deal with unauthorised encampments**. The Government will put this guidance on a statutory footing in “due course” and will keep these powers under review.¹⁴⁶

In addition, the Government will:

- undertake further work to ensure that measures are in place to address issues around the **clean-up costs** which can occur following an unauthorised encampment.¹⁴⁷
- consider how to improve the timeliness of possession cases in the county court (the court process by which possession of either property or land is regained), as part of the Government’s broader **courts and tribunal service reform programme**.¹⁴⁸

ii) Dealing with unauthorised development

Process delays, particularly for appeals, and a lack of resources (both in local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate) were the issues most commonly cited in the consultation as potentially preventing effective use of powers for dealing with unauthorised development.¹⁴⁹

The Government considers that the range of current planning enforcement powers available to local authorities are sufficient. However, it has proposed a number of measures to help authorities use these powers more effectively and has committed to:

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p9

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p18

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p9-10

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p9

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 29

- provide up to **£1.5 million of funding for local authorities to support planning enforcement** through the next round of the [Planning Delivery Fund](#), helping them deal with unauthorised development¹⁵⁰
- **consider extending the period of time that a temporary stopping notice can be in place for.**¹⁵¹ Temporary stopping notices require that specific activities which are in breach of planning control stop immediately. They are effective for a 28 period, as set out in section [171E of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#). The Government will engage with local planning authorities and other stakeholders about how far the stopping period could be reasonably extended.
- **consult on options for strengthening policy on intentional unauthorised development.**¹⁵²

7.5 Reactions to the Government's proposals

The charity Friends, Families and Travellers (FFT) has criticised the Government's plans to strengthen powers to deal with unauthorised encampments:

We are deeply concerned that the proposals present unauthorised encampments and antisocial behaviour as one and the same thing. We are equally concerned that the proposals fail to recognise that the main cause of unauthorised encampments is the abject failure of government to identify land for sites and stopping places.

[...] The proposals set out call for tougher powers for police and increased support for local authorities in exercising existing powers. Overwhelmingly, the focus has been on how this would benefit settled communities but there seems to be a wilful ignorance of its impact on travelling families. We know that existing powers already have a devastating impact on families who face some of the most extreme health inequalities of any group in the UK and some of the poorest educational outcomes. We are confident that the new proposed powers will only worsen these outcomes.¹⁵³

An article in the Travellers Times contends that strengthening police powers and seeking to make trespass a criminal offence "is a deliberate violation of the human rights of Gypsy and Traveller communities in Britain".¹⁵⁴

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma has criticised the Government's plans to increase police powers as "wholly

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p10

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., p11

¹⁵³ '[Get tough on site provision, not on people with no place to go](#)', *Friends, Families and Travellers press release*, 7 February 2019

¹⁵⁴ '[The persecution of Britain's Gypsy and Traveller community continues](#)', *Travellers Times*, 15 February 2019

disproportionate, particularly in the light of the huge national shortage of pitches". The Traveller Times reports the Co-Chair, Kate Green, as saying:

The Government should not introduce additional police powers which target vulnerable groups based simply on a false 'perception' that the rule of law does not apply to Gypsies and Travellers, and with a clear absence of robust policy measures to create appropriate and sufficient accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller communities. The APPG will continue to make these points forcefully to Ministers.¹⁵⁵

According to the local democracy think tank LGiU, the Government's plans have been hailed as a victory by some MPs who have long campaigned for tougher government action on Traveller sites. It reports the following reaction from the Southend West MP Sir David Ames:

I am thrilled that the government have finally taken action on this issue. MPs from across Essex have for too long been urging the government to toughen laws on illegal encampments, and our constituents will be relieved to see something finally being done to tackle this problem head on.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ ['Politicians condemn Government 'crack down' on unauthorised Traveller camps'](#), *The Travellers Times*, 21 February 2019

¹⁵⁶ LGiU, [Briefing: The Irish Option – Changing the Way Councils Respond to Travellers](#), 7 May 2019

8. Health

In 2014 the Government published a report from the Data and Research Working Group of the National Inclusion Health Board (NIHB): [Inclusion Health Board report Hidden Needs: Identifying Key Vulnerable Groups in Data Collections](#). The report identified that the poor health experiences of some Gypsy and Traveller groups made them particularly vulnerable, and that they faced much higher rates of mortality and morbidity than the general population:

The health experiences of some Gypsy and Traveller groups are so much worse than their counterparts that (following the Inclusion Health Board's intent to focus on the worst outcomes) they should be designated as particularly vulnerable. Male Irish travellers in Ireland have a suicide rate 6.6 times higher than the general population; Gypsy Travellers in the Thames Valley have a 100-fold excess risk of measles arising from low immunisation. The report of the Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths in the UK, 1997-99, found that Travellers have 'possibly the highest maternal death rate among all ethnic groups'. These population health findings based on robust data are stark and require urgent public health focus, including targeted suicide prevention services, a robust system of reporting of infectious diseases in the Gypsy/Traveller population and of levels of immunisation (both currently absent), and a robust system for monitoring maternal mortality (also absent).¹⁵⁷

The NIHB called for more effective local action to address these concerns, including better local planning and commissioning of services, and measures to improve access.

[Inclusion of Gypsy Traveller health needs in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments: A review \(2015\)](#) was compiled by the charity Friends, Families and Travellers. This review found that Gypsies and Travellers were more likely to develop certain conditions, less likely to access certain services, and more likely to have a poorer experience of health services due to direct or indirect discrimination. In particular, it reported a number of research findings, including:

- A greater prevalence of long-term conditions (42% of English Gypsies are affected by a long-term condition, as opposed to 18% of the general population).
- Considerably higher numbers of smokers in the Gypsy Traveller population – (57%) compared to matched comparators (21.5%).¹⁵⁸

It also reported evidence that Gypsies and Travellers have higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression, higher rates of stillbirth, infant mortality and maternal death, and the poorest self-reported health.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ The National Inclusion Health Board (NIHB): [Inclusion Health Board report Hidden Needs: Identifying Key Vulnerable Groups in Data Collections](#) (2014)

¹⁵⁸ [Parry G. et al. The Health Status of Gypsies & Travellers in England, Report of Department of Health Inequalities in Health Research Initiative Project 121/7500 \(2004\).](#)

¹⁵⁹ ONS, Ethnic variations in general health and unpaid care provision, 2011

The report concluded that these inequalities arise due to a range of factors – with poor accommodation, discrimination, poor health literacy, and a lack of cultural awareness and understanding by health professionals of Gypsy Traveller health and social needs, all creating barriers to accessing health services.

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and NIHB report [Improving access to health care for Gypsies and Travellers, homeless people and sex workers](#) (September 2013) stated that the lack of sustainable accommodation created a particular problem with registering with a GP. The Friends Families and Travellers' report [No room at the inn: How easy is it for nomadic Gypsies and Travellers to access primary care?](#) (20 March 2019) also highlighted this issue.

In October 2017, the Government published its [Race Disparity Audit](#). Gypsies and Travellers were not identified as a distinct ethnic group in a number of health-related categories. Where they were, the Audit reported the following:

- 80.8% of White Gypsy/Traveller respondents had been able to book an NHS dental appointment – the lowest of any ethnic group;
- White Gypsy/Travellers had the second lowest satisfaction rate with NHS dental services in 2016/17 (71.2%);
- 60.7% of White Gypsy/Travellers had a positive experience making a GP appointment (the third lowest score of any ethnicity), and there was a 75.6% satisfaction rate with GP services (also the third lowest);
- White Gypsy/Irish Traveller had the highest satisfaction score with GP out-of-hours services (75.2%) and the highest satisfaction score in 2016/17 with NHS hospital care of any ethnic group (81.9%).¹⁶⁰

The Traveller Movement's [September 2017 report on discrimination experienced by Gypsies and Travellers](#) recommended that "NHS England should update their data monitoring systems, as a matter of urgency, to include Gypsy and Irish Traveller categories, as per the 2011 Census".¹⁶¹ In November 2018 the Department of Health and Social Care said it was in the process of reviewing the collection of data within the NHS and had commissioned NHS England to complete a scoping exercise to understand how information on protected characteristics is gathered in existing NHS datasets.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ HM Government, [Ethnicity Facts and Figures: Health](#) (accessed 17 April 2018)

¹⁶¹ The Traveller Movement, [The last acceptable form of racism? The pervasive discrimination and prejudice experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), 13 September 2017, p8

¹⁶² [PQ HL11014, 5 November 2018](#)

8.1 Policies to address health needs

In 2012, the Ministerial Working Group on Gypsies and Travellers published a [Progress Report](#) on tackling inequalities, which included the following healthcare commitments:

- Work with the National Inclusion Health Board (NIHB) and the NHS, local government and others to identify what more must be done to include the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the commissioning of health services.
- Explore how health and wellbeing boards can be supported to ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers with the worst health outcomes are better reflected in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and joint health and wellbeing strategies.
- Work with the UCL Institute of Health Equity and the Inclusion Health working groups to identify gaps in data and research, and look to identify the specific interventions that produce positive health outcomes.
- Work with the Inclusion Health working groups to identify what more needs to be done to improve maternal health, reduce infant mortality and increase immunisation rates.
- Work with the NIHB to embed the Inclusion Health programme in training for all health professionals, with the aim of developing a strong, stable and capable workforce that can drive change and make a difference to the lives and health outcomes of the most vulnerable.
- In September 2013, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the NIHB produced a toolkit on commissioning for socially excluded groups. This aimed at widening access to health services and improving the health outcomes of marginalised groups, specifically the homeless, Gypsies and Travellers and sex workers. It included the following “commissioning considerations” when planning services for Gypsies and Travellers:

Information sharing between different agencies is a key factor in improving access for Gypsies and Travellers, especially given their high mobility and complex needs.

Community engagement is important for professionals to establish a relationship with the wider network of people, and makes sure that a trusted relationship is gradually set up. This will also contribute to the design of a service that meets the community’s perceived need and develop a sense of ownership.

Mainstream services: Even though one of the most widely implemented strategies has been the ‘dedicated health visitor’, this should not necessarily be seen as an example of best practice. In fact, Travellers do not want dedicated services, but would much rather be able to access the same high quality services as everyone else, which will also reduce ‘singling out’ (PCC Framework, 2009).

Poor **living conditions** and environmental factors are the single most influential contributing factor to the poor health status of Gypsies and Travellers, including stress. This makes partnership working between the different agencies, including the NHS, Local

Authorities Social Services, Housing and Environmental Health, and voluntary sector organisations, even more important to provide a coordinated response to these inter-related issues.¹⁶³

[Inclusion of Gypsy Traveller health needs in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments: A review](#) (2015) called on Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs)¹⁶⁴ to include analysis of Gypsies' and Travellers' health needs in their JSNAs:

If Gypsy Traveller health needs are not included in robust and comprehensive needs assessments they risk being excluded from strategies and commissioning to address health inequalities.¹⁶⁵

The report further called for effective engagement with Gypsy Traveller communities in developing JSNAs.

Also in 2015, NHS England published guidance on the rights of vulnerable groups in registering with GPs to reduce the risk of exacerbating health inequalities for vulnerable groups. In 2017 NHS England launched a new leaflet designed for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, to complement the 2015 guidance.¹⁶⁶ This guidance sets out that practices cannot refuse registration of a person from the Gypsy Roma and Traveller community on the basis that they live on an authorised or unauthorised site, are of 'no fixed abode', or do not have proof of address or identification. Responding to ongoing concerns about access to GP services the Government commented that NHS England is working with a range of community groups to redesign the patient registration leaflet so that people are aware of this when registering.¹⁶⁷

In 2016 the NIHB report [Impact of insecure accommodation and the living environment on Gypsies' and Travellers' health](#) set out suggested actions to improve the living conditions and health outcomes of Gypsies and Travellers, based on concerns in earlier reports about the vulnerability of this group. It called for more joined-up working by local authorities, the NHS and responsible health agencies, and local public health services. It also emphasised the importance of building greater community cohesion to address some of the key obstacles to the development of a healthy and sustainable environment for Gypsy and Traveller families.

¹⁶³ Royal College of General Practitioners, [Improving access to health care for Gypsies and Travellers, homeless people and sex workers \(September 2013\)](#), p22

¹⁶⁴ HWBs were introduced as statutory committees of all upper-tier local authorities under the *Health and Social Care Act 2012*. They are intended to: improve the health and wellbeing of the people in their area and reduce health inequalities. The primary responsibility of HWBs is to produce Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) to identify the current and future health and social care needs of the local community.

¹⁶⁵ Friends, Families and Travellers, [Inclusion of Gypsy Traveller health needs in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments: A review](#), 2015

¹⁶⁶ NHS England Leaflet, [Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Communities: How to register with a doctor \(GP\)](#)

¹⁶⁷ [PQ24011 9 April 2019](#)

The Government has commissioned research to investigate approaches to community engagement that are most likely to enhance trust between Gypsy/Travellers and health services. The research, [Enhancing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller peoples' trust: using maternity and early years' health services and dental health services as exemplars of mainstream service provision](#), was published in September 2018. It made eight key recommendations to improve uptake of services and reduce inequalities for the Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) communities:

1. Sustain investment in projects and initiatives to allow relationships and trust to develop and continue;
2. Increase collaborative working with those that already have trusted relationships with GRT communities e.g. individuals from third sector organisations, individual health or other sector professionals;
3. Develop minimum standards of courtesy for all health service personnel including first points of contact e.g. receptionists, helpline staff;
4. Simplify GP and dentist registration e.g. allow c/o addresses, flexible requirements for proof of address; and develop less punitive approaches to dealing with non-attendance or arriving late for appointments;
5. Introduce literacy help cards throughout NHS (cards that can be presented to front line staff or receptionists to ask for discreet help with form-filling etc.) and provide alternatives to written information;
6. Enhance GRT people's health literacy: e.g. awareness of health service-user rights, tips on how to communicate with healthcare professionals and confidence to ask questions
7. Use engagement with routine maternity and child health services to deliver wider health messages, especially relating to child oral health
8. Provide flexible services e.g. flexible times/'drop-in' services/multiple access routes, one-stop shop¹⁶⁸

A PQ response on 11 March 2019 stated that the Department is currently considering the recommendations set out in the report.¹⁶⁹

In its February 2019 evidence to the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee inquiry into inequalities faced by GRT communities, NHS England set out work to address the health needs of these communities:

Through the delivery of the Inclusion Health Programme we work to ensure that the health needs of Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, in relation to access, experiences and outcomes are addressed. This is evident through our work with CCGs and health systems to influence their role in developing and shaping

¹⁶⁸ McFadden, A. et al, [Enhancing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller peoples' trust: using maternity and early years' health services and dental health services as exemplars of mainstream service provision](#) (Leeds GATE, the University of Dundee and the University of York, 14 September 2018)

¹⁶⁹ [PQ HL14076, 11 March 2019](#)

local and strategic commissioning intentions of health services, which are appropriate, fair and equitable to all communities. A key driver for this work is the CCG Improvement and Assessment Framework (IAF) and the NHS Outcomes Framework Indicators.¹⁷⁰

The NHS England evidence to the Committee also noted how it had worked with GRT communities, and referred to commitments on equality and health in the NHS Long Term Plan (7 January 2019):

4.1 During the development of the Long Term Plan, NHS England met with and visited a number of organisations working to support Gypsy, Roma and Travellers. We have also closely followed pilot projects designed to address inequalities experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Travellers. This has identified a number of good practice examples and promising interventions that will be considered for inclusion in the menu of evidence-based interventions we will publish, with Public Health England and VCSE partners, to help local health systems meet the new requirement to set out how they will specifically reduce health inequalities by 2023/24 and 2028/29.

4.2 The plan provides an opportunity to look further at how primary care for all inclusion groups, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities can be further improved over the next decade. The plan is currently in development and will be published early this year.

4.3 Transparency and accountability will also be enhanced by the requirement for CCGs that are benefitting from the health inequalities funding adjustment to set out for the first time how they are targeting that funding to improve the equity of access and outcomes. The Long-Term Plan renews our commitment to commissioning, partnering with and championing local charities, social enterprises and community interest companies providing services and support to vulnerable and at-risk groups, including Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, which we recognize as leading innovators in their field and key partners in helping us achieving our ambitions to promote equality and reduce health inequalities.

4.4 In addition, the inclusion group of health charities within the Health and Wellbeing Alliance, which includes Friends Families and Travellers, have identified a small number of common themes which would help improve experience and outcomes for vulnerable patient groups, including Gypsy, Roma and Travellers. These included the need to tackle prejudice limiting access to services, improve the cultural understanding of health professionals and enhance personalised care for marginalised patients, which recognises their abilities as well as experiences of trauma.¹⁷¹

On 20 March 2019 the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee published its report, [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#) (HC360, Seventh Report of Session 2017–19).¹⁷² Chapter 2 of the report noted that health outcomes for GRT communities are very poor compared to other ethnic groups.

¹⁷⁰ [NHS England - written evidence \(GRT0006 13 February 2019\)](#)

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Women and Equalities Committee, [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), HC 360 2017-19, 20 March 2019

Chapter 6 made a number of recommendations to address discrimination and barriers to accessing health services. The Committee heard about problems with accessing healthcare services, registering for services due to discrimination or language and literacy barriers, and problems associated with a lack of trust leading to a lack of engagement with public health campaigns. The Committee raised concerns that many Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) did not include proper consideration of GRT needs and were not complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty. It recommended that the Equality and Human Rights Commission should conduct a formal inquiry under section 16 of the *Equality Act 2006* into how JSNAs are including GRT health needs (para 95).

Other Committee recommendations included that:

- The CQC should expand the programme “Experts by Experience” to look at equalities issues and should include Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people who have the best knowledge of where unequal treatment may be taking place (para 98)
- The new assessment of needs for CCG resource allocation should include an explicit section for CCGs to outline the needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in their local areas. This need should be taken into account by NHS England when it is allocating funding to CCGs (para 102)

The Committee awaits the Government’s response to its report.

9. Education

9.1 Educational attainment

In England, primary pupils' attainment and progress is measured by national tests and assessments at the end of the primary schooling phase (Key Stage 2). These tests and assessments are often referred to as SATs.

In 2018, 64% of all pupils reached the expected standard in all of English reading, writing and mathematics. Of children identified as Gypsy/Roma, 18% met the expected standard. For those identified as travellers of Irish heritage, the figure was 22%.¹⁷³

At the end of Key Stage 4, secondary level, in 2018, 19% of state-funded school pupils identified as Irish Traveller attained GCSEs in English and Maths at grade 4/C or above. The figure for pupils identified as Gypsy/ Roma was 13%.¹⁷⁴ Nationally, 64% of state-funded school pupils attained these qualifications.¹⁷⁵

The Cabinet Office's Race Disparity Audit cites data from previous years:

[P]upils from Gypsy or Roma backgrounds and those from a Traveller or Irish Heritage background had the lowest attainment of all ethnic groups throughout their school years. [...] at age 5, around a quarter of Gypsy and Roma pupils achieved a good level of development, making them around three times less likely to do so than average. At key stage 4 the disparity is wider; in 2015/16 the Attainment 8 score – an average of points scored for attainment in 8 GCSEs including English and Maths – for Gypsy and Roma pupils was 20 points compared with the English average of 50 points and 62 points for Chinese pupils. Gypsy and Roma pupils, and those from an Irish Traveller background, also made less progress compared with the average for pupils with similar prior attainment. They were also far less likely to stay in education after the age of 16 than pupils in any other ethnic group, with just 58% of Irish Traveller pupils and 62% of Gypsy and Roma pupils staying on in 2014/15, compared with 90% of White British pupils and 97% of Chinese pupils.¹⁷⁶

Higher education

On 8 July 2017, LCMco published a report commissioned by King's College London (KCL), [The underrepresentation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in higher education](#). This research considered barriers to educational attainment and progress from the early years onwards.

¹⁷³ Department for Education, [National curriculum assessments: key stage 2, 2018 \(revised\)](#), 29 January 2019.

¹⁷⁴ The total number of pupils identified as traveller of Irish heritage and Gypsy/ Roma at the end of KS4 is very small – 472 and 2,160 respectively. In England as a whole, there were just under 620,000 end-of-KS4 pupils in 2018. This should be borne in mind when interpreting these figures.

¹⁷⁵ Department for Education, [Key stage 4 and multi-academy trust performance 2018 \(revised\)](#), 24 January 2019.

¹⁷⁶ Cabinet Office, [Race Disparity Audit](#), updated March 2018, p19.

The report cites data on school-level attainment and progress suggesting much lower rates of attainment for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils than the national average, but emphasises that the figures should be treated with caution “as the characteristics and circumstances of individuals who are willing and able to ascribe their Gypsy, Roma or Traveller identity may not be representative of this population as a whole”.¹⁷⁷

In higher education (HE), the research reports that GRT groups are significantly underrepresented, but again, concerns about coverage of the data made it “difficult to accurately determine the extent of this [...]”.¹⁷⁸

The report identified a range of barriers to educational achievement at school level:

- Cultural barriers including: mobility; language and system knowledge; norms, aspirations and expectations; and, cultural identity.
- Material barriers including: poverty; inadequate housing and homelessness; and, access to healthcare and special educational needs support.
- Prejudice and discrimination including: discriminatory attitudes and media prejudice; schools’ response to discrimination; self-exclusion from mainstream education as a result of discrimination; and, discrimination in HE.¹⁷⁹

At HE level, the researchers identified additional barriers:

- A lack of policy attention and supportive initiatives.
- Issues of identity and inclusion.
- The relevance of HE curricula to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture.
- Pupils’ perceptions of HE.
- Financial issues and attitudes to debt.¹⁸⁰

9.2 School attendance

Children who are travelling with their families can be dual-registered (i.e. on the roll of more than one school at the same time), may enrol at a school at their current location, or may be home educated.

Department for Education (DfE) non-statutory guidance sets out the rules concerning school attendance for Gypsy and Traveller children:

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when

¹⁷⁷ LKMco, [The underrepresentation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in higher education](#), 8 July 2017, p5

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school.

Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.¹⁸¹

The Cabinet Office's Race disparity audit notes:

4.10 Low educational attainment and progress is associated with poor attendance at school. The pupils most likely to be absent were Gypsy or Roma pupils, and those of an Irish Traveller background, with overall absence rates (that is, the percentage of all possible 'sessions' that were missed) of 13% and 18% respectively in 2016. This compares with 4.6% for White British pupils and 2.4% for Chinese pupils.¹⁸²

There is no requirement in England to attend school, although under section 7 of the *Education Act 1996* (as amended) parents are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age¹⁸³ receive an efficient full-time education tailored to their aptitudes, abilities and any special needs they may have. As such, home education is legal and parents are not under any general requirement to notify the local authority that they intend to home educate. The local authority is not under a statutory duty to routinely monitor the quality of home education, but they are required to identify children of compulsory school age who are not receiving a suitable education.

In April 2019, and following consultation, the DfE published revised guidance on elective home education – one version for [local authorities](#) and one for [parents](#). On Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, the guidance for local authorities says:

10.22 Local authorities should have an understanding of and be sensitive to the distinct ethos and needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. It is important that these families who are educating their children at home are treated in the same way as any other families in that position. Home education should not be regarded as less appropriate than in other communities. When a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller family with children of school age move into an area, they should be strongly encouraged to contact the local Traveller Education Support Service for advice if one is in place, or the authority's admissions team for help to access local educational settings if school places are desired. Further guidance can be obtained from the DfE's report: [Improving the outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller's pupils](#). The [Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers](#) is another source of information.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Department for Education, [School attendance](#), November 2016, p12

¹⁸² Cabinet Office, [Race Disparity Audit](#), updated March 2018, pp22-23.

¹⁸³ Children are of compulsory school age on the appointed day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday, if this falls on an appointed day). The appointed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August.

¹⁸⁴ Department for Education, [Elective home education. Departmental guidance for local authorities](#), April 2019, pp38-9.

The DfE also published a [consultation](#) on proposed legislation on children not in school. This is due to close on 24 June 2019. Further details on the consultation and proposals can be found in the Commons Library briefing paper, [Home education in England](#) (SN05108).

The LKMco report covered in Section 9.1 above identified a fear of bullying and racial discrimination as one of the main considerations of parents when deciding whether to send their children to school. The report cites evidence suggesting that 80% of GRT children had experienced bullying or being called racist names.¹⁸⁵ A 2014 report by the British Association of Social Workers claims that nearly 90% of children and young people from a GRT background have experienced racial abuse.¹⁸⁶

9.3 School admissions

Every local authority area is required to have a Fair Access Protocol to help place children who need a school place outside the normal admissions round, and who haven't been able to find a school place through the usual routes.

As the statutory [School Admissions Code](#) makes clear (para 3.15), Children of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are one of the groups that must be covered by Fair Access Protocols. Some local authorities operate fair access panels, which meet to agree which school will offer a place to the child under the protocol.

Generally, infant classes¹⁸⁷ in schools are limited to 30 pupils per school teacher. Children can be admitted in excess of this number in some circumstances; in this case they are known as excepted children. Whilst there is no special category for Gypsy or Traveller children, children moving to the area 'in year' who can't get a school place within reasonable distance can be considered excepted children.

9.4 School exclusion

Statutory [DfE guidance on school exclusion](#) stresses the importance of providing additional support to address the needs of children from groups at higher risk of exclusion, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children:

20. The exclusion rates for certain groups of pupils are consistently higher than average. This includes: pupils with SEN; pupils eligible for Free School Meals; looked after children; and pupils from certain ethnic groups. The ethnic groups with the

¹⁸⁵ Derrington and Kendall, Gypsy Traveller students in secondary schools: Culture, identity and achievement, 2004, cited in LKMco, [The underrepresentation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in higher education](#), 8 July 2017

¹⁸⁶ Lane, P., et. al./ Anglia Ruskin University, [Gypsy, Traveller and Roma: Experts by experience](#), October 2014, p30

¹⁸⁷ These are the first three classes of primary schooling – reception, year one and year two, where the majority of children will turn 5, 6 or 7, respectively, during the school year.

highest rates of exclusion are: Gypsy / Roma; Travellers of Irish Heritage; and Black Caribbean communities.

21. In addition to the approaches on early intervention set out above, head teachers should consider what extra support might be needed to identify and address the needs of pupils from these groups in order to reduce their risk of exclusion. For example, schools might draw on the support of Traveller Education Services, or other professionals, to help build trust when engaging with families from Traveller communities.¹⁸⁸

The Gov.uk 'Ethnicity facts and figures' website notes that, in 2016/17, pupils from the Traveller of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma ethnic groups had the highest rates of both temporary ('fixed period') and permanent exclusions.¹⁸⁹

9.5 Funding educational services for GRT children

From 2011-12, many of the separate DfE grants made in support of school expenditure and local authorities' central functions were mainstreamed into a single Government grant, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This included the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, the purpose of which was to support the participation and attainment of children from BME groups, including Gypsies and Travellers, as well as children with English as an additional language.

Currently, it is up to local authorities (in consultation with bodies called Schools Forums) to decide how to share out DSG funding between schools in their area, and to decide how much to retain for shared services or functions. In doing so, they must have regard to DfE guidance. Some local authority areas provide a traveller education service, but this is not a statutory requirement.

9.6 Government action to support education of GRT children and young people

In a House of Lords debate on Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in March 2018, Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen outlined what the Government had done recently to address educational disparities. She said:

What are the Government doing now? The noble Baronesses, Lady Wheeler and Lady Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville, and other noble Lords mentioned joined-up thinking. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government maintains close contact with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stakeholder groups, while the Department for Education has established a Gypsy, Roma, Traveller stakeholder group. The DHSC, the Department for Education and the MHCLG—I hate acronyms—held a trilateral

¹⁸⁸ Department for Education, [School exclusion](#), September 2017 (in force 1 September 2017), p11

¹⁸⁹ Gov.uk/ Department for Education, [Ethnicity facts and figures: Pupil exclusions](#), September 2018; [Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2016 to 2017](#), August 2018.

ministerial meeting to discuss Gypsy, Roma and Traveller issues in November 2017, and we plan to continue holding regular cross-government meetings.

[...]

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, working with the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education, is funding up to six community-led pilot groups. These projects will improve educational attainment, health, and social integration for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and will be delivered in 2018-19. These projects will be reported quarterly and there will be a full report at the end of the year.¹⁹⁰

As noted in the Government response to the MHCLG consultation on unauthorised developments and encampments (see section 7), the DfE also published a [respectful school communities self-review and signposting tool](#) in November 2018.

9.7 House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee inquiry report – recommendations on education

Section 5 (page 22 onwards) of the Committee's [inquiry report](#) focuses on participation in education, and outcomes, for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups.¹⁹¹ It describes the educational barriers faced by GRT children as severe, and argues that addressing poor educational outcomes is vital in tackling other inequalities.

The Committee urged the Government, Ofsted and local authorities to make it their first priority to ensure that no child was denied their legal entitlement to an education. Further, it recommended that the DfE should carry out an audit of all local authorities to ensure they were complying with their legal duties in respect of children who were potentially missing education; there should also be more oversight by local authorities of home educated children.

Other recommendations included that:

- The DfE should consider piloting a pupil passport scheme, to ensure that when children travel, their educational records stay with them.
- Ofsted should ensure they are inspecting schools for stereotyping and racism by staff and pupils.
- The Government should increase the capacity of organisations that provide role models to schools, in respect of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

¹⁹⁰ [HC Deb 08 March 2018 c117](#)

¹⁹¹ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, [Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#), HC 360 2017-19, 20 March 2019

9.8 A Good Practice Guide for improving outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children in education

In April 2019 the Traveller Movement published a report entitled [A Good Practice guide for improving outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in education](#) which outlined three years of research, case studies, and good practice, as compiled by the Traveller Movement education and advocacy team.

The report concluded that “improvements to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupil attainment requires time, flexibility, financial and social investment, and a commitment to equality and inclusion” and put forward recommendations for action by the Government, schools and parents.¹⁹²

¹⁹² The Traveller Movement, [A Good Practice Guide for improving outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children in education](#), April 2019, Executive Summary

10. Employment and training

10.1 Employment¹⁹³

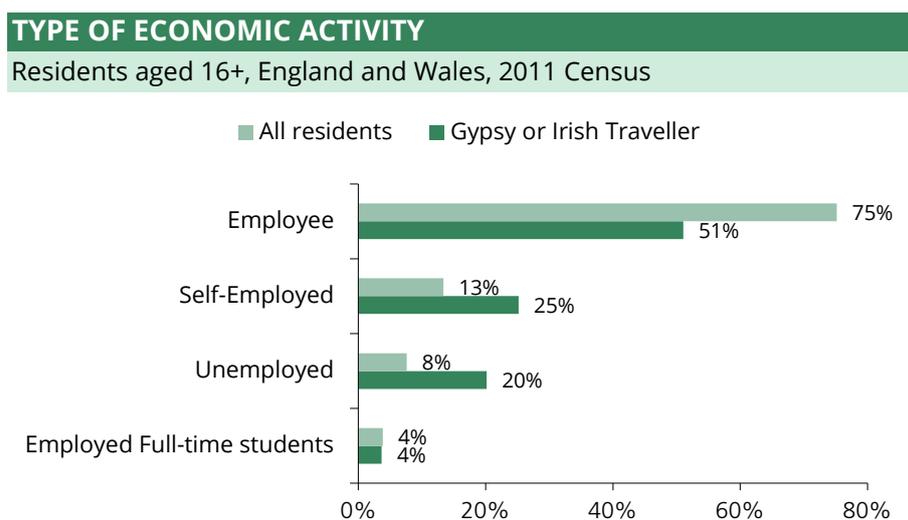
The 2011 Census found that Gypsy or Irish Traveller was the ethnic group with the lowest employment rates and highest levels of economic inactivity. Gypsies and Irish Travellers also had the highest unemployment rate.

Of those resident in England or Wales at the time of the Census:

- 40% of Gypsies or Irish Travellers aged 16-64 were in employment. This compares to 71% of all residents, and 73% of those in the White ethnic group. They were the ethnic group with the joint highest employment rate.
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller was also one of the ethnic groups with the lowest proportion of residents who were economically active (defined as those who are either in employment, or actively seeking and available for work). 50% of Gypsy or Irish Travellers were economically active, compared to 77% for all residents.
- The unemployment rate for Gypsy or Irish Travellers was 20% (this is the percentage of the economically inactive population aged 16+ who are unemployed). This was the joint highest rate of all ethnic groups and compared to a rate of 7% for all residents. 10% of **all** Gypsies and Irish Travellers aged 16-64 were unemployed, higher than the average of 6% for all residents.

Type of economic activity

The chart below compares the type of economic activity for Gypsy and Irish Travellers in England and Wales with that of all residents:

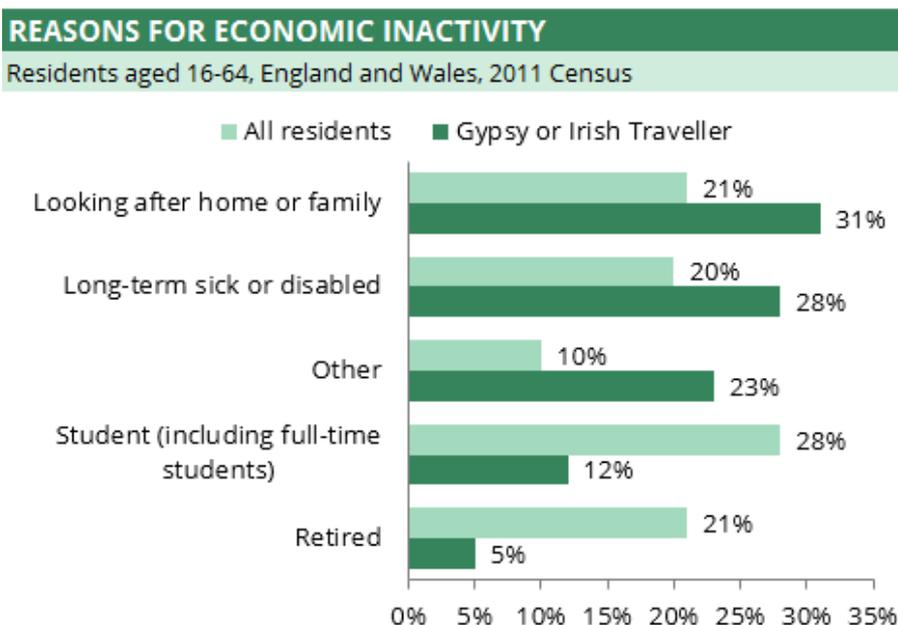


¹⁹³ Data in this section comes from two Office for National Statistics reports: ONS, [2011 Census analysis: Ethnicity and the Labour Market, England and Wales](#), 13 November 2014, table 1
ONS, [2011 Census analysis: What does the 2011 Census tell us about the characteristics of Gypsy or Irish travellers in England and Wales?](#), 21 January 2014

Of those in employment, Gypsies or Irish Travellers were more likely to be self-employed than other residents, and less likely to be an employee. 64% of employed Gypsies or Irish Travellers were employees (40% full-time), compared to 81% of all employed residents (61% full time), while 32% of employed Gypsies or Irish Travellers were self-employed compared to 14% of all employed residents.

Reasons for economic inactivity

The 2011 Census also found that, of those aged between 16 and 64 and resident in England and Wales, nearly 60% of economically inactive Gypsies or Irish Travellers were either looking after the home or family (31%) or were long-term sick or disabled (28%). In comparison 41% of all economically inactive residents in England and Wales were inactive for this reason (21% were looking after the home or family and 20% were long-term sick or disabled).



Inactive Gypsies or Irish Travellers were less likely to be students than any other ethnic group. While 28% of all economically inactive residents in England and Wales were students, only 12% of inactive Gypsies or Irish Travellers were likewise. 43% of inactive residents in the Mixed, Asian, Black or Other ethnic groups were students.

Only 5% of Gypsies or Irish Travellers in this age group were retired. The average for all residents was 21%, although this was largely driven by the White ethnic group with 25% of those who were economically inactive also being retired. The majority of the other ethnic groups had a similar proportion who were retired as for Gypsies or Irish Travellers.

Occupation

2011 Census data revealed that Gypsies or Irish Travellers were more likely to be working in Elementary Occupations. 22% of those aged 16 and over were working in these occupations, compared to 11% of all residents in England and Wales. The occupations in this category include farm workers, process plant workers, cleaners or service staff.

A higher proportion of Gypsies or Irish Travellers were working in Skilled Trades than for any other ethnic groups. 19% did so, compared to 12% for all residents in England and Wales. This includes farmers and those working in electrical and building trades.

Of all the ethnic groups, Gypsies or Irish Travellers were least likely to be working in Professional Occupations. Only 7% did so at the time of the 2011 Census, compared to 17% of all residents aged 16 and over in England and Wales.

10.2 Training

180 apprenticeships were started by Gypsies or Irish Travellers in the 2017/18 academic year, 0.05% of all apprenticeships, and slightly more than the 160 apprenticeships started in 2016/17.¹⁹⁴

There are no government policies which specifically target Gypsies or Irish Travellers to take up apprenticeships, but the Government does have various schemes in place that aim to increase the number of apprenticeships started by people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.¹⁹⁵

These schemes include the '5 Cities Project', which was launched in February 2018 and aims to increase the number of people in underrepresented groups who take up apprenticeships. The Government has not made a direct assessment of how this project is expected to impact on the number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers who participate in apprenticeships.^{196 197}

The [Apprenticeships Diversity Champions Network](#) (ADCN) launched in 2017 and has over 70 members. This network champions apprenticeships and diversity amongst employers, and encourages more people from underrepresented groups to consider apprenticeships.

One of the aims of the marketing scheme, [Fire it Up](#), is to demonstrate that apprenticeships are accessible to people from all backgrounds.

40 Gypsies and Irish Travellers started traineeships in England in 2017/18. 17,700 traineeships were started in total.¹⁹⁸

In 2012/13 0.1% of Gypsy or Irish Travellers aged 19 or over were participating in the Skills System. This compares to 22% of Black, Asian or Minority Group adults aged 19 or over.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ DfE, [Apprenticeships and traineeships data](#)

¹⁹⁵ [PQ 240958](#), 10 April 2019

¹⁹⁶ Department for Education, [New project to boost diversity in apprenticeships](#), 1 February 2018

¹⁹⁷ [PQ HL6783](#), 13 April 2018

¹⁹⁸ DfE, [Apprenticeships and traineeships data](#)

¹⁹⁹ [Written Answers](#), 24 March 2014, Column WA87

10.3 Policies to increase employment levels

In 2012, the Ministerial Working Group on Gypsies and Travellers published a [Progress Report](#) on tackling inequalities. Chapter 7 focused on employment and reported that:

- The poor literacy skills of Gypsies and Travellers significantly disadvantaged them in seeking employment. They also lacked qualifications, and softer skills such as confidence and motivation.
- There was a lack of data within Government on the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in employment and claiming out-of-work benefits.
- Although Gypsies and Travellers did not feel individually discriminated against by Jobcentre Plus, there existed a fear of possible discrimination and lack of sensitivity to their culture.
- Historically Gypsies and Travellers had not been included within the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group, an independent body (supported by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)) aiming to increase the employment rate for ethnic minorities.²⁰⁰

On the back of this, the report made four commitments:

- 1 To provide personalised support via the Work Programme and, where needed, access to appropriate skills support.
- 2 To include Gypsies and Travellers as a monitoring category in Department for Work and Pensions IT, processing and management information systems.
- 3 To improve internal guidance and staff awareness within the DWP of Gypsies and Travellers as ethnic groups.
- 4 The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain will represent Gypsies and Travellers on the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group.²⁰¹

The Coalition Government reported that, as at 30 October 2014, the first three commitments had been taken forward, and the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group had been re-launched as the Ethnic Minority Employment Stakeholder Group (EMESG), whose membership included the Irish Traveller Movement.²⁰²

The last meeting of the EMESG took place in November 2014. The EMESG webpage states that the group has now closed, and the “DWP has chosen to operate on a more one-to-one basis, and... engage in a more targeted and ad hoc approach”.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ MHCLG, [Reducing Inequalities for Gypsies and Travellers: Progress Report](#), 4 April 2012, Chapter 7

²⁰¹ Ibid

²⁰² DEP 2014-1503 -Deposited House of Lords - 11 November 2014

²⁰³ www.gov.uk, [Ethnic Minority Employment Stakeholder Group](#) [Accessed 1 May 2019]

11. Benefits and tax credits

Very limited information is available on receipt of benefits and tax credits by Gypsies and Travellers. Census data on educational attainment, economic activity, family structures, health status and caring responsibilities suggests higher levels of need among the Gypsy and Traveller community compared with the population as a whole.²⁰⁴ Anecdotal and qualitative evidence, on the other hand, indicates that historically, Gypsies and Travellers have made little use of Jobcentre Plus services, and may have a cultural bias against claiming out-of-work benefits.²⁰⁵

The 2012 report of the Ministerial Working Group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers flagged up poor literacy and numeracy skills as a barrier to seeking employment, and impacting on individuals' understanding of the conditionality requirements for Jobseeker's Allowance. Research carried out for the Working Group indicated that Gypsies and Travellers felt most positive about their experiences with Jobcentre Plus employment support when they had been able to build a relationship over time with a single named adviser. The report stated that Jobcentre Plus had now moved to a model of support where claimants were assigned to one adviser for the duration of their claim.²⁰⁶ It is not clear whether this model has been carried forward as wider welfare reforms have been implemented.

Work undertaken for the Ministerial Working Group also found that, while in general Gypsies and Travellers did not feel individually discriminated against by Jobcentre Plus, there was a real fear of discrimination and a belief that staff might not always be sensitive to their culture. Internal guidance for DWP staff now includes "easy-to-find information about Gypsy and Traveller issues, including background to the population, history and cultural traditions, as well as links to best practice, and to Gypsy Roma and Traveller organisations".²⁰⁷ This guidance is not in the public domain.

11.1 Impact of welfare reform

Major changes to the benefits system are currently underway as a result of reforms begun by the Labour Government, substantial reforms introduced by the Coalition Government, and further measures initiated by the 2015 Conservative Government. The single biggest reform is Universal Credit – which is replacing means-tested benefits and tax credits and will affect around 7 million working-age families – but other important elements include the introduction of Personal Independence

²⁰⁴ Office for National Statistics, [2011 Census analysis: What does the 2011 Census tell us about the characteristics of Gypsy or Irish travellers in England and Wales?](#), 21 January 2014

²⁰⁵ MHCLG, [Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers](#), April 2012, para 7.2

²⁰⁶ Ibid, para 7.7

²⁰⁷ [Deposited Paper DEP2014-1503](#), 30 October 2014

Payment (PIP), changes to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Housing Benefit measures including the under-occupation deduction, a four year freeze in working-age benefit rates, the household benefit cap, and the two child limit in tax credits and Universal Credit from April 2017. Groups representing Gypsies and Travellers are concerned that, given that they already experience some of the worst outcomes of any group across a wide range of social indicators, welfare reforms “pose a significantly greater risk of negatively impacting on Gypsies and Travellers”.²⁰⁸

Potential problems Gypsies and Travellers might face with the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) include:²⁰⁹

- Difficulties claiming UC because of limited access to the internet and low literacy and numeracy skills.
- Potential payment issues due to the fact that many Gypsies and Travellers do not have bank accounts (although there is a “Payment Exception Service” available in very limited circumstances which allows people without a bank account to collect their payments).
- The challenges posed by monthly payments for those who are unbanked, have literacy or numeracy issues, or who are living in insecure accommodation; and the need for appropriate personal budgeting support and/or alternative payment arrangements.
- Difficulties Gypsies and Travellers could face understanding the conditionality requirements under UC, and concerns that some could struggle to adhere to the terms of their “claimant commitment” as a result of discrimination, cultural, educational and skills barriers.
- Problems self-employed Gypsies and Travellers might face as a result of the requirement to report monthly cash-in and cash-out figures, and the “Minimum Income Floor” (the assumed level of earnings that may apply after 12 months, which is intended to be an incentive to increase earnings).

In a Huffington Post blog on 11 April 2018 highlighting the potentially disproportionate impact of Universal Credit on Gypsies and Travellers, the Labour MP Kate Green argued that the paucity of data on Gypsies and Travellers reduced pressure on the Department for Work and Pensions to address concerns.²¹⁰

The household benefit cap²¹¹ and restrictions on support for third and subsequent children born after April 2017²¹² could also have a

²⁰⁸ Irish Traveller Movement in Britain and Leeds GATE, [Impact of Universal Credit and welfare reforms on the Gypsy and Traveller communities](#), May 2013, p4

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Kate Green, [Is Universal Credit 'Fairer And Simpler' for Gypsies and Travellers?](#), Huffington Post Blog, 11 April 2018

²¹¹ See Commons Library briefing paper, [The benefit cap \(SN06294\)](#), 23 November 2016

²¹² See Commons Library briefing paper, [The two child limit in tax credits and Universal Credit \(CBP-7935\)](#), 10 April 2017

disproportionate impact, given that Gypsies and Travellers traditionally have larger families than the settled population.

12. Criminal justice system

12.1 David Lammy Review of the treatment of, and outcomes for, BAME individuals in the criminal justice system

In January 2016, the former Prime Minister David Cameron asked David Lammy to lead a [review of the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic \(BAME\) individuals in the criminal justice system in England and Wales](#). The final report of the review, published on 8 September 2017, set out 35 recommendations to reform the system.²¹³ The report identified problems in establishing exactly how many Gypsy and Traveller people are in prison or in the youth justice system, and concerns about over-representation of this group in both sectors. These issues are discussed below.

The [Government's response](#) to the Lammy Review, published on 19 December 2017, outlined the actions the Government intended to take in relation to each recommendation. In the response, the Government committed to publishing more and better data on race and ethnicity, where possible including on Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller defendants and offenders:

The MoJ will publish more and better data on ethnicity where possible and we will welcome external analysis where it throws light on problems that need closer examination, especially where it relates to smaller minority groups. This will be implemented in statistics bulletins during 2018/19, or next annual publication after this date. For example, Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller defendants and offenders often have specific needs that are not met by the criminal justice system, because of a lack of data on their treatment and outcomes. We will review the potential further breakdown of data for this ethnic group as new data becomes available with the new criminal justice system data standard capture system 18+1 (18 ethnicity categories plus "other"). However, the numbers may be too small to conduct meaningful analysis.²¹⁴

The Government has set up a Race and Ethnicity Board, chaired by the Ministry of Justice, to monitor the implementation of recommendations as well as contributing to the Government's wider work around tackling racial disparities.²¹⁵

The House of Commons Justice Committee conducted an oral evidence session examining the progress of the implementation of the Lammy

²¹³ The Lammy Review, [An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System – Final Report](#), 8 September 2017

²¹⁴ Ministry of Justice, [Government Response to the Lammy Review on the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System](#), Cm 9550, 19 December 2017, para 25

²¹⁵ [PQ HL4903 \[Race and Ethnicity Board\], 1 February 2018](#)

Review's recommendations in March 2019.²¹⁶ David Lammy gave evidence to the Committee. Whilst he spoke positively about the Government's reception of his review he acknowledged that the implementation of his recommendations would be slow.²¹⁷

12.2 Adult prisons

The 2012 [Progress Report](#) by the Ministerial Working Group (discussed in section 2.2 of this briefing paper) cited a number of earlier reports detailing difficulties and discrimination for Gypsies and Travellers.²¹⁸ It concluded that these may have affected both interactions with staff and "some prisoners' willingness to identify as Gypsy or Traveller".²¹⁹

In 2014, HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) published a report, [People in Prison: Gypsies, Romany and Travellers](#), which considered evidence from prisoner surveys and inspectorate reports. It noted that, following on from the inclusion of Gypsy and Irish Traveller as an ethnic category in the 2011 Census, the same category was included for new prison receptions on the prison IT system for England and Wales (P-NOMIS). However, those already in custody had not had an opportunity to revise their prison record.²²⁰

In annual Inspectorate surveys, the question 'Do you consider yourself to be Gypsy, Romany or Traveller?' has been included since 2009. In 2012-13, 5% of prisoners responded 'yes' to this question; the response was 4% in 2010-11 and 2011-12.²²¹

HMIP's report noted that prisoners who identified as Gypsy, Romany or Traveller were "significantly less likely to say that they felt safe on their way to prison and/or that they felt safe on their first night in prison".²²² Once within the system they were more likely to have concerns about their safety and to say that they had suffered victimisation than other prisoners. However, they were more likely than non-Gypsy, Romany and Traveller prisoners to report victimisation when they had experienced it.

The report concluded that even on the lowest estimates (which are accepted to be underestimates) Gypsy, Romany and Traveller prisoners were "significantly overrepresented in the prison population".²²³ The report also highlighted poor outcomes:

Our surveys support assertions in other literature that the Gypsy, Romany and Traveller group are experiencing poorer outcomes

²¹⁶ HC 2086, [Justice Committee Oral evidence: Progress in the implementation of the Lammy review's recommendations](#), 26 March 2019

²¹⁷ Ibid, Q25-Q51

²¹⁸ MHCLG, [Reducing Inequalities for Gypsies and Travellers: Progress Report](#), 4 April 2012, chapter 6

²¹⁹ Ibid, p26

²²⁰ HMIP, [People in prison: Gypsies, Romany and Travellers A findings paper by HM Inspectorate of Prisons](#) February 2014

²²¹ Ibid, paras 1.11-1.15

²²² Ibid, para 1.20

²²³ Ibid, para 1.36

across a range of areas. Most concerning are the negative perceptions of their own safety in prison and the levels of victimisation they report, both priority areas where action is needed. Prisoners who consider themselves to be Gypsy, Romany or Traveller are also more likely to report problems in areas of health, including mental health, and substance misuse. However, they consistently state they are less likely to receive support in these, and other, areas. We have identified good practice in some establishments but in others this is hampered by the lack of knowledge about these prisoners.²²⁴

A 2015 report by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman examined deaths of Travellers in custody and concluded:

A number of interlinked issues are visible in most of our investigations of Traveller deaths in prison. Not all these issues are unique to Travellers, but their marginalised status and the prevalence of discrimination against them in prison (and in the community), as well as their lifestyle, can heighten vulnerability.²²⁵

12.3 Youth justice

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons conducts annual reviews of Children in Custody, and the most recent, published in November 2017, shows that a disproportionate number of children being held in custody have Gypsy, Romany or Traveller backgrounds:

In relation to STCs [Secure Training Centres], our survey findings during 2016–17 show that ...the proportion who said they were from a Gypsy, Romany or Traveller background was 10%, which compares with estimates of 0.01% in the population as a whole.²²⁶

And

In relation to YOIs [Young Offender Institutions], our survey findings during 2016–17 show that... 7% of boys identified as being from a Gypsy, Romany or Traveller background.²²⁷

The 2016/17 Children in Custody review also highlighted that Gypsy, Romany or Traveller children in STCs were significantly more likely to have ever felt unsafe at the centre during their time there (58% compared with 18% of children who did not identify as Gypsy, Romany or Traveller). They were also significantly more likely to have experienced victimisation from other young people in the form of:

- insulting remarks (69% compared with 28%);
- intimidation/threatening behaviour (58% compared with 16%);
- shout-outs/yelling through windows (58% compared with 19%);

²²⁴ Ibid, para 1.37

²²⁵ Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, [Learning lessons bulletin: Fatal incident investigations issue 7: Deaths of Travellers in Prison](#), 2015, p6

²²⁶ HMIP, [Children in Custody 2016–17](#), 22 November 2017, p7

²²⁷ Ibid.

- having had their canteen/property taken (33% compared with 5%).²²⁸

Gypsy, Romany or Traveller boys in Young Offender Institutions reported very similar experiences to those of other boys. However, they were significantly more likely than others to have experienced being victimised, both by other young people (7% compared with 1%) and staff (7% compared with 0%), because they were from a Traveller community. They also reported more positively with regard to participation in vocational or skills training, with 21% of them involved in such activities compared with only 7% of the other boys.²²⁹

A December 2016 report by the Traveller Movement also found that Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children were “hugely overrepresented” in the youth justice system, and suffered worse outcomes. It also highlighted the issue of self-harm:

A notable omission in the surveys are questions around self-harm. It is widely acknowledged that Gypsies, Travellers and Roma have higher rates of suicide and self-harm than other ethnic groups. The Traveller Movement, through our networks and experience of working with these groups in prisons know self-harm remains a pressing issue; particularly for young Gypsies and Travellers.²³⁰

A Westminster Hall debate on outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers in the youth justice system was held on 1 February 2017.²³¹

²²⁸ HMIP, [Children in Custody 2016–17](#), 22 November 2017, p26

²²⁹ Ibid, p43

²³⁰ The Traveller Movement, [Overlooked and Overrepresented: Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children in the youth justice system](#), December 2016, p11

²³¹ [HC Deb 1 February 2017 cc348-355WH](#)

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