



BRIEFING PAPER

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Gypsies and Travellers

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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, Irish Travellers, Scottish Gypsies/Travellers and Welsh Gypsies/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.

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. The Traveller Movement has launched a campaign 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 January 2017 was 22,004, an increase of 32% since 2007. The majority (56%) of caravans were on private sites, 31% were on sites operated by local authorities and registered providers of social housing, and 13% were on unauthorised sites. Studies have raised concerns about environmental conditions on some Traveller sites.

Unauthorised sites are frequently a source of tension between the travelling and settled communities. Public bodies have a range of powers to deal with illegal and unauthorised encampments. Some local authority areas have adopted a 'negotiated stopping' approach to travelling families as an alternative to legal action.

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

A shortage of permanent and transit Gypsy and Traveller sites continues to be a pressing issue, which results in unauthorised encampments, weakened community cohesion and local authority expenditure on eviction and clearing up illegal sites.

Responsibility for planning for the provision of sufficient Gypsy and Traveller sites in England lies with local authorities. 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 from travelling, has attracted criticism from the community.

There are a number of challenges in turning evidenced need for accommodation into the provision of new sites, including objections from local residents. Research by Gypsy and Traveller organisations in 2016 concluded that local authorities had made insufficient progress in identifying a five-year supply of sites to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

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.

Education

Children from Gypsy and Traveller communities attain and progress significantly below the national average throughout compulsory education. In 2016, 18% of pupils from Irish Traveller backgrounds and 9% from Gypsy and Roma backgrounds attained 5 GCSEs (or equivalents) at grades A* to C, compared to 57% of pupils in England. 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

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.

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, has 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, sets out 35 recommendations to reform the system.

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, Irish Travellers, and Scottish Gypsies 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.

Further information

More detailed information on the ethnic and cultural background of Gypsies and Travellers is provided by the Traveller Movement on their

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](#) [Accessed 8 August 2017]

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

⁴ European Commission webpage, [EU and Roma](#) [Accessed 8 August 2017]

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

web page on cultural history

(<http://travellermovement.org.uk/index.php/resources/cultural-history/>).

The Travellers Aid Trust has published 'A Grant-makers Guide to Supporting Gypsies and Travellers' (<http://travellersaidtrust.org/grant-makers/>) which provides further information on the different Traveller groups.

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

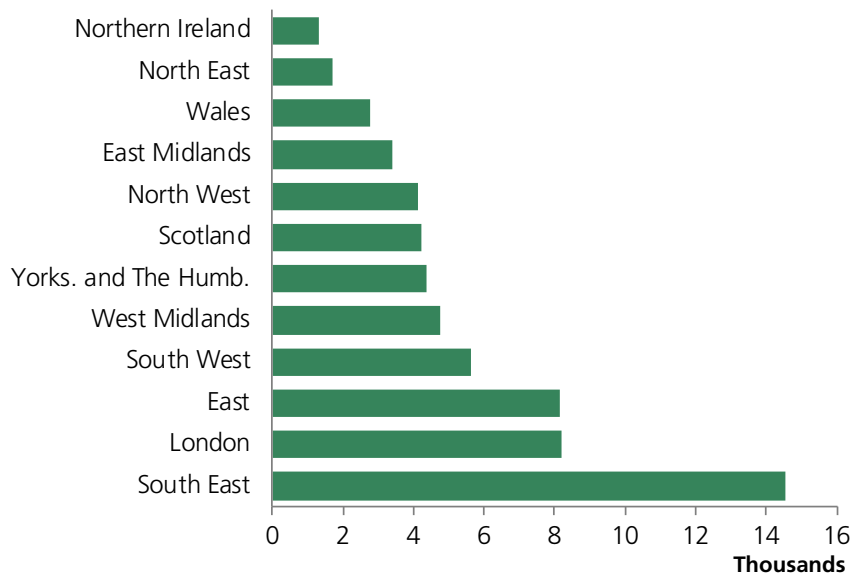
In total around 63,000 people in the UK identified themselves as members of these groups at the 2011 Census, of which 58,000 were living in England and Wales, 4,000 were living in Scotland, and 1,000 were living in Northern Ireland.

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?

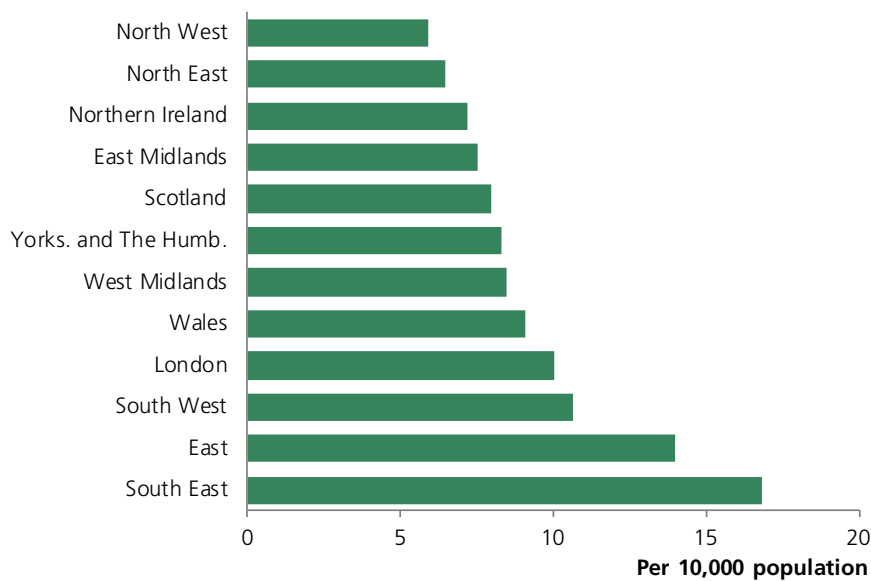
Gypsies, Travellers, and Irish Travellers by nation and region, UK, 2011 Census



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.

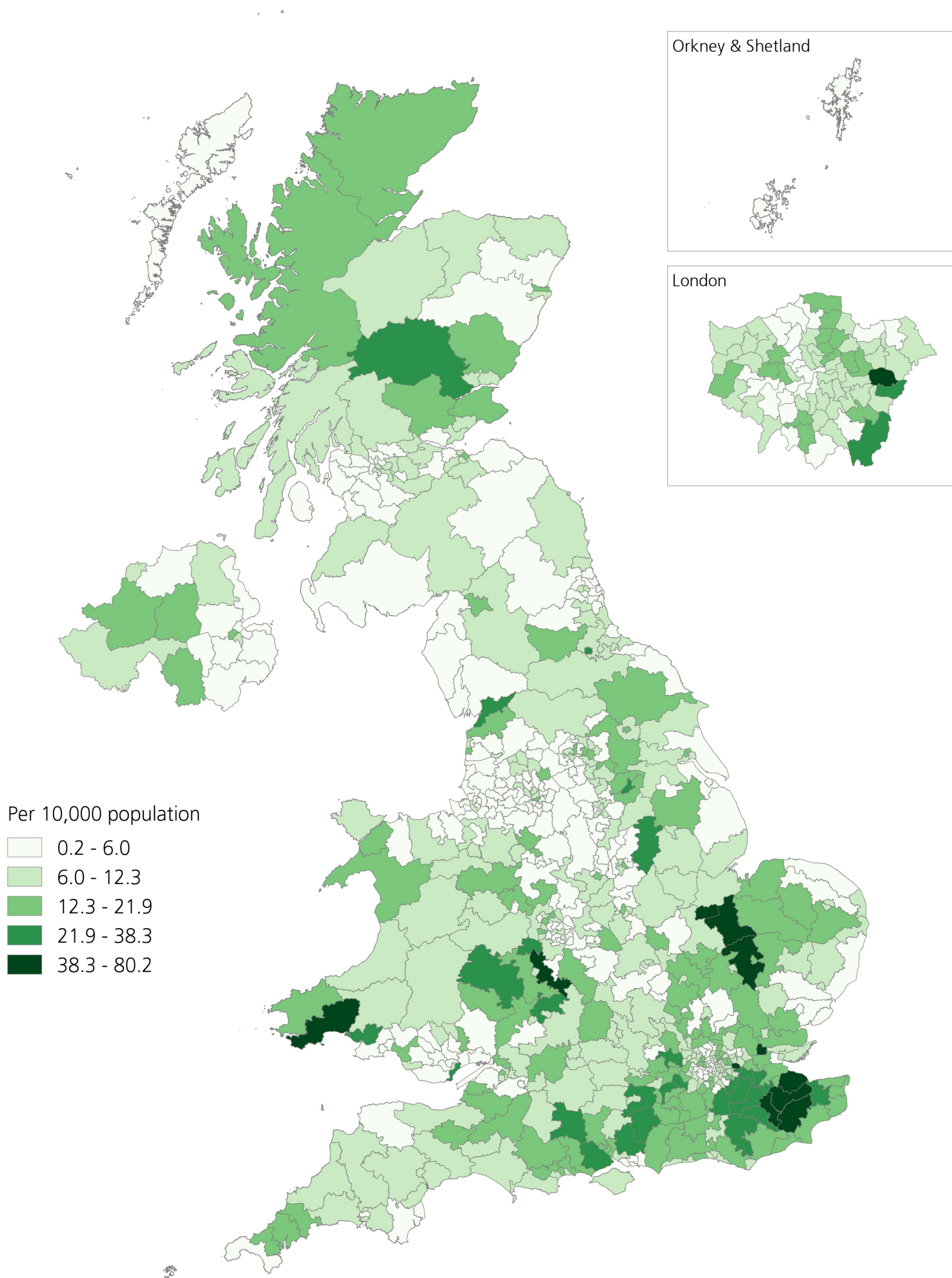
The map overleaf shows the number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers per 10,000 people at the 2011 Census broken down by Parliamentary constituency. The constituency with the largest number per 10,000 people was Basildon and Billericay (80), while the constituency with the smallest was Mansfield (0.2).

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.

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

Gypsies, Travellers, and Irish Travellers by constituency



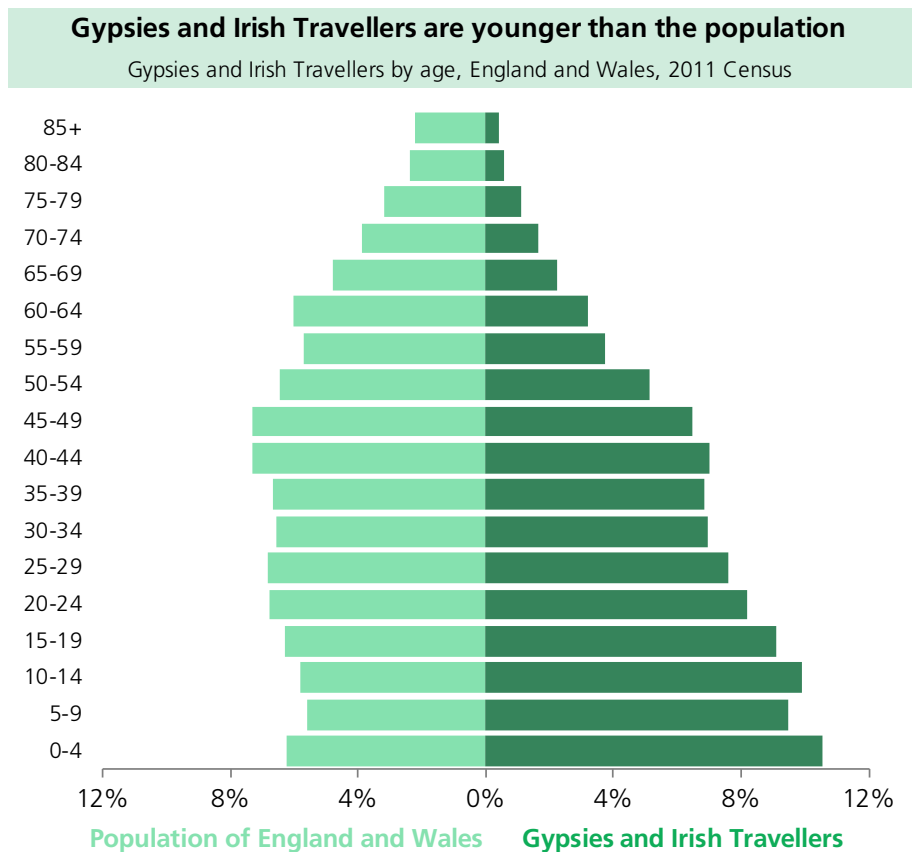
1.3 Country of birth

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.¹⁰

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.



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

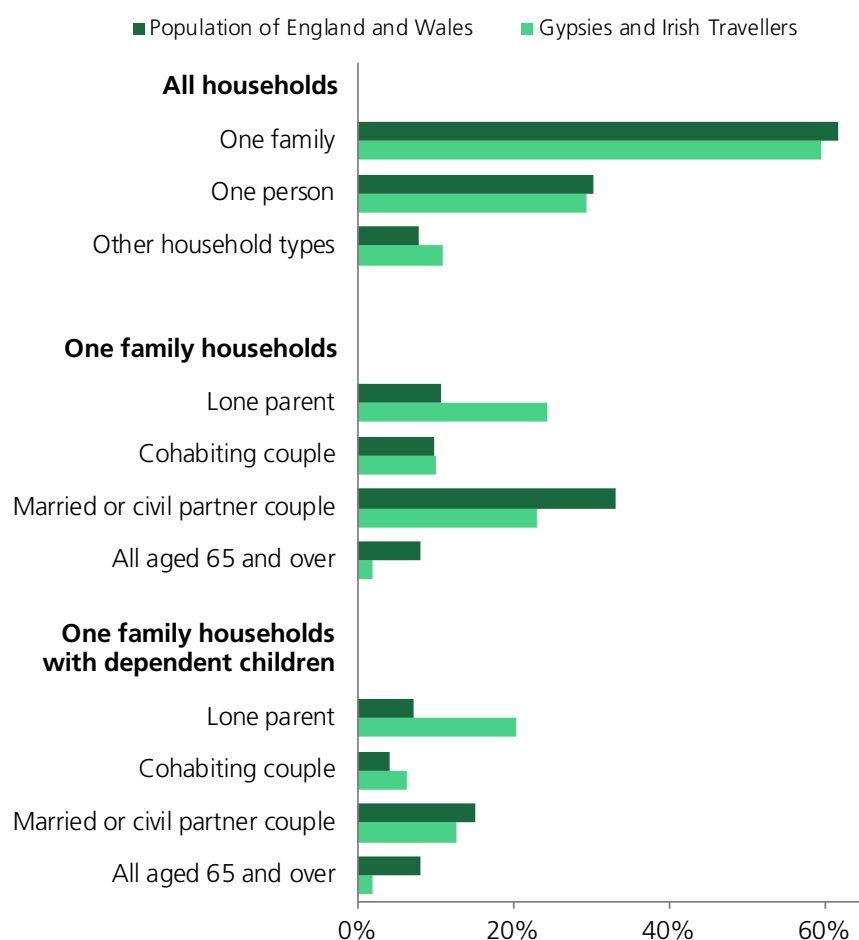
¹⁰ Department of Health, National Inclusion Health Board, [Impact of insecure accommodation and the living environment on Gypsies' and Travellers' health](#), 8 January 2016

1.5 Household composition

There were 20,500 households¹¹ in England and Wales with a household reference person¹² 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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 11) 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...¹³

Subsequent EHRC reports entitled [How Fair is Britain?](#),¹⁴ published in 2010, [Human Rights Review](#),¹⁵ published in 2012, and [Is Britain Fairer? The state of equality and human rights 2015](#),¹⁶ 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

¹³ 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

¹⁴ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [How fair is Britain? Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations in 2010 – The First Triennial Review](#), 1 October 2010

¹⁵ 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

¹⁶ 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.¹⁷

The EHRC subsequently published a [spotlight report](#)¹⁸ 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.

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.¹⁹

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.²⁰ At the same time, a [summary of progress](#) against each of the commitments was deposited in the Library of the House.²¹

2.3 UK National Roma Integration Strategy

In April 2011 the European Commission published [An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020](#),²² 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

¹⁷ Equality and Human Rights Commission webpage, [England's most disadvantaged groups](#) [Accessed 8 August 2017]

¹⁸ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Is England Fairer? Spotlight Report: The experience of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in England](#), March 2016

¹⁹ DCLG, [Reducing Inequalities for Gypsies and Travellers: Progress Report](#), 4 April 2012

²⁰ [Written PQ HL2504 \[Travellers\] 11 November 2014](#)

²¹ Deposited Paper DEP2014-1503, 11 November 2014

²² 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

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.²³ 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.²⁴

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.²⁵

2.4 Select Committee inquiries

The House of Commons Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee published a report, [Gypsy and Traveller Sites](#), in November 2004.²⁶ The Committee expressed concern about the lack of authorised sites and stopping places available to Gypsies and Travellers,

²³ European Commission Website, [UK National Strategy for Roma Integration](#) [Accessed 8 August 2017]

²⁴ 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

²⁵ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, [ECRI Report on the United Kingdom \(fifth monitoring cycle\)](#), 4 October 2016

²⁶ House of Commons ODPM: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee - [Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Thirteenth Report of Session 2003–04](#), HC 633-I, 8 November 2004

and called on the Government to “provide a statutory framework, political leadership and capital funding” to tackle the problem.²⁷

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.²⁸

The House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee launched an [inquiry on Tackling inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities](#) in November 2016. The inquiry intended to examine the progress made in achieving the Ministerial Working Group's 28 commitments. However, it was closed due to the General Election on 8 June 2017.

²⁷ Ibid, p68

²⁸ HM Government, [Government Response to ODPM Select Committee Report on Gypsy & Travellers Sites](#), Cm 6465, January 2005

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.²⁹ 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.³⁰

In fact, Romany Gypsies,³¹ Scottish Travellers³² and Irish Travellers³³ 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.³⁴

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.³⁵

²⁹ Equality Act 2010, ss.4 & 9

³⁰ Para 58

³¹ *CRE v Dutton* [1983] 2 AC 548

³² *McClellan v Gypsy Traveller Education Information Project* (2008) 23 June, unreported (case no. S/132721/07)

³³ *P O’Leary and others v Allied Domecq and others* (2000) 29 August, unreported, Central London County Court, HHJ Goldstein.

³⁴ For further information on the equality duty, see Commons Library briefing paper: [The Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Impact Assessments](#) (SN06591)

³⁵ 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...³⁶

More recently, 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).³⁷

The British media has also been criticised for depicting and reinforcing negative stereotypes of Gypsies and Travellers.³⁸

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

³⁶ 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

³⁷ Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Is England Fairer? Spotlight Report: The experience of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in England](#), March 2016

³⁸ See for example: London Gypsies and Travellers, [Video: Gypsies and Travellers in the Media](#) [Accessed 9 August]; and Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Is England Fairer? Spotlight Report: The experience of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in England](#), March 2016

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.”³⁹

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 (above), 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

³⁹ 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.⁴⁰

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.⁴¹

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.⁴²

4.3 Brexit and hate crime

There was a sharp increase in the number of racially or religiously aggravated offences recorded by the police following the EU Referendum.⁴³ In October 2016, the Institute for Public Policy Research highlighted the risk of Roma feeling marginalised as a result of insecurity about their residency and the end of EU funding to support their integration:

- In the wake of Britain's vote to leave the EU, Roma migrants from central and eastern Europe, alongside all other non-British EU citizens, face uncertainty about their future in the UK. In the short term, reports of a sharp increase in the number of hate crimes towards ethnic minority groups are a cause for concern and require immediate attention. In the long term, EU migrants' legal rights of residence and access to healthcare and other public services are no longer set in stone.
- These uncertainties are particularly worrying for Britain's Roma community as many Roma migrants face multiple dimensions of disadvantage across employment, education, housing and health. Evidence from Glasgow suggests that Roma often work in unregulated sectors of the economy, taking temporary jobs through non-statutory employment agencies, with very low wages, illegal deductions and poor working conditions. Gypsy/Roma children (as categorised

⁴⁰ CPS [Racist and religious crime – CPS guidance](#)

⁴¹ College of Policing, [Hate Crime Operational Guidance](#), 2014, p31

⁴² Ibid, p32

⁴³ Home Office, [Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2015/16](#), Statistical Bulletin 11/16, 13 October 2016, Annex A, [Figure A2](#)

by the Department for Education) tend to have high school exclusion rates and low levels of educational attainment. Research suggests that Roma tend to experience poor housing conditions and overcrowding, and are often exploited by unscrupulous landlords. Our research has found that Roma face particular barriers to accessing healthcare, often due to language difficulties and their unfamiliarity with NHS systems.

- In general, there is little evidence of widespread conflict between Roma and non-Roma groups in the UK. However, in some communities, low-level tensions have emerged between Roma and other residents, developing on the one hand from concerns about alleged anti-social behaviour among the Roma community, and on the other from fears of anti-Roma xenophobia and stigmatisation.⁴⁴

The report argued that local authorities should develop strategies for managing community relations and that those local authorities with large Roma communities should ensure that support for Roma integration is included as an essential part of their strategy.⁴⁵

4.4 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.⁴⁶

In January 2017 the Communities Secretary, Sajid Javid, announced £375,000 of new funding to further encourage the reporting and prevention of hate crime.⁴⁷ The [Traveller Movement](#) was one of the organisations receiving funding from the package. In partnership with other organisations, the Traveller Movement has 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.

⁴⁴ Institute for Public Policy Research, [Roma communities and Brexit: Integrating and empowering Roma in the UK](#) (online summary) 24 October 2016

⁴⁵ Marley Morris, Institute for Public Policy Research, [Roma communities and Brexit: Integrating and empowering Roma in the UK](#), p4

⁴⁶ Home Office, [Action against hate: the UK government's plan for tackling hate crime](#), July 2016

⁴⁷ ['New hate crime package to target groups at need'](#), Department for Communities and Local Government Press Notice, 26 January 2017

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 may live in different ways:

- Some Gypsies/Travellers are permanently 'on the road', moving regularly around the country from site to site.
- Others live permanently in caravans or mobile homes, on sites provided by the council, or on private sites.
- Some Gypsies/Travellers live in settled accommodation during winter or school term-time and then travel during the summer.
- Others may be settled altogether in 'bricks and mortar' housing, but still retain a strong commitment to Gypsy/Traveller culture and traditions.⁴⁸

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.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰ 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

⁴⁸ The Traveller Movement webpage, [Cultural History](#), 15 October 2015

⁴⁹ 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

⁵⁰ The Traveller Movement webpage, [Our Background](#), 6 September 2015

authorities, low levels of literacy, isolation from family support networks, and neighbourhood tensions.⁵¹

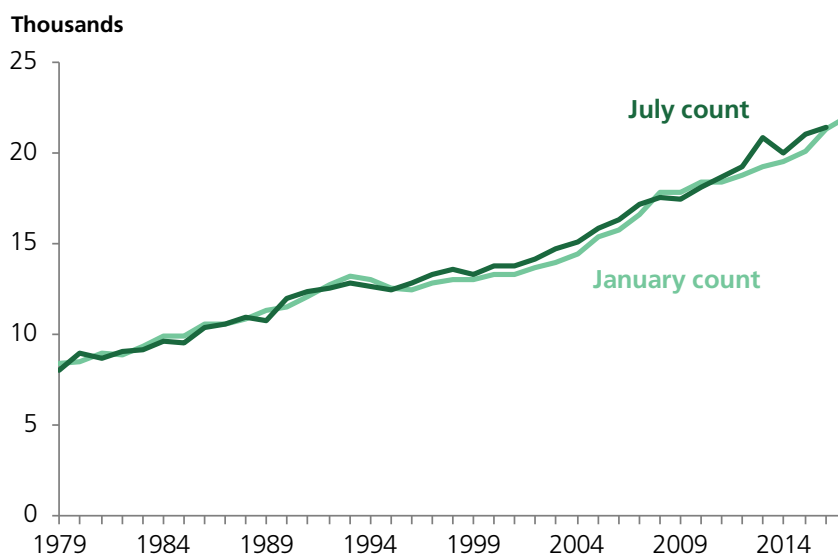
Number of Traveller caravans

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) publishes official statistics on the number of Traveller caravans⁵² 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 January 2017 count, the total number of Traveller caravans in England was 22,004. This is an increase of 32% since 2007.⁵³ The chart below illustrates the increase in the number of Traveller caravans from January 1979 to January 2017.

The number of Traveller caravans in England has increased

Number of Traveller Caravans, England



Source: DCLG, Traveller caravan count: January 2017, Live Table 4

5.2 Traveller sites

Types of sites

In January 2017, 31% of Traveller caravans were on public sites;⁵⁴ 56% were on privately funded sites; 10% were in unauthorised

⁵¹ Shelter, *Good Practice Briefing: Gypsies and Travellers*, February 2007

⁵² The count includes caravans lived in by traditional and ethnic Gypsies and Travellers as well as members of the non-traditional New Traveller groups.

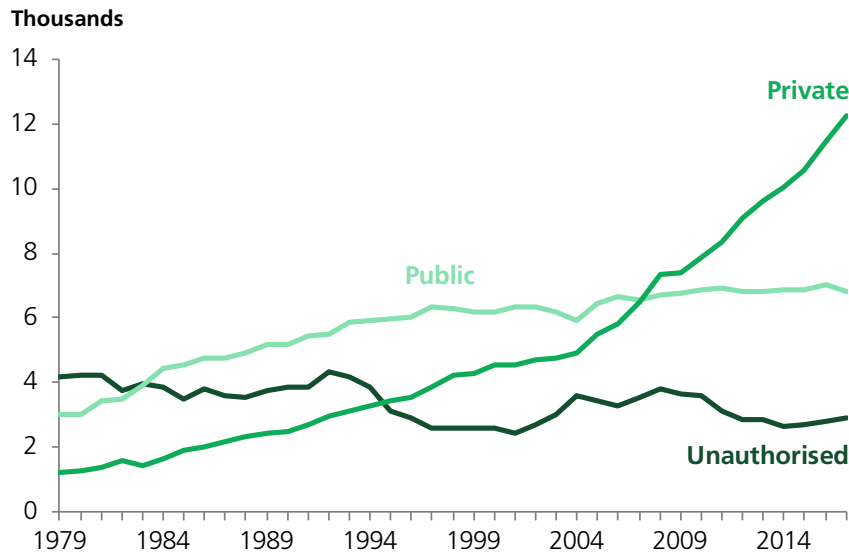
⁵³ DCLG, *Housing Statistical Release: Count of Traveller Caravans, January 2017 England*, 25 May 2017

⁵⁴ Operated by local authorities and private registered providers of social housing, including housing associations, trusts and cooperatives.

developments on land owned by travellers⁵⁵; and 4% were in unauthorised encampments on land not owned by travellers.⁵⁶ 327 sites were recorded as being operated by local authority and private registered providers of social housing.⁵⁷

Most Traveller caravans in England are on private sites

Number of Traveller Caravans in England by type of site



Source: DCLG, Traveller caravan count: January 2017, 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 39% in January 2007 to 56% in January 2017. The proportion of caravans on all authorised sites (including public sites) has risen from 79% in January 2007 to 87% in January 2017.

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 2015 Conservative Government undertook to review the effectiveness of the mobile homes legislation. An initial call for evidence closed on 27 May 2017.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Sites on land owned by Travellers for which planning permission had not been granted.

⁵⁶ DCLG, [Count of Traveller Caravans, January 2017 England, Housing Statistical Release](#), 25 May 2017, p3

⁵⁷ DCLG, [Count of Traveller Caravans, January 2017 England, Housing Statistical Release](#), 25 May 2017, table 2

⁵⁸ DCLG, [Review of park homes legislation: call for evidence](#), 12 April 2017

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 sewage and water fittings; poor-quality utility rooms; and failings in fire safety.⁵⁹

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.⁶⁰

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.⁶¹

5.3 Unauthorised Traveller sites

The proportion of Traveller caravans on unauthorised sites has fallen from 21% in January 2007 to 13% in January 2017. In January 2017, there were 2,921 caravans on unauthorised sites. Of these, 2,141 caravans were on land owned by Travellers and 780 caravans were on land not owned by Travellers.⁶²

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 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

⁵⁹ 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

⁶⁰ Department of Health National Inclusion Health Board, [Impact of insecure accommodation and the living environment on Gypsies' and Travellers' health](#), 8 January 2016

⁶¹ Chartered Institute of Housing, [Managing and delivering Gypsy and Traveller sites: negotiating conflict](#) by De Montfort University, and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, December 2016

⁶² DCLG, [Traveller caravan count: January 2017](#), 25 May 2017, table 1

encampment has been, or is likely to be, allowed to remain for an indefinite period of months or years.

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.⁶³

According to this classification, in January 2017, 1,519 caravans (52%) were on a tolerated unauthorised site and 1,402 caravans (48%) were on a not tolerated unauthorised site.⁶⁴

Unauthorised sites are frequently a source of tensions between the travelling and settled communities. The travelling community argue that there are insufficient sites so they are forced to stop or settle on unauthorised sites which lack facilities and services, and where accommodation insecurity can make it difficult to access public services. Whilst settled communities may view unauthorised encampments and developments as an invasion of their environment, and object to the costs which result from evicting illegal campers and cleaning the site.⁶⁵

Moving on Gypsies and Travellers from unauthorised sites

The Department for Communities and Local Government, Home Office, and Ministry of Justice have 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](#) (March 2015).⁶⁶

A [joint ministerial letter](#), issued alongside the summary of powers, to council leaders, police and crime commissioners and police chief constables about their response to unauthorised encampments stated:

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.

⁶³ Ibid, p8

⁶⁴ Ibid, table 1

⁶⁵ House of Commons ODPM: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee - [Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Thirteenth Report of Session 2003–04](#), HC 633-I, 8 November 2004, p105

⁶⁶ 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

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,
- (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.⁶⁷

The Scottish Government has published [Guidance for Local Authorities on Managing Unauthorised Camping by Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland](#) (April 2017).⁶⁸

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 etc. 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.⁶⁹

5.4 Homelessness legislation

Part 7 of *the Housing Act 1996* (as amended) provides the statutory under-pinning for action to tackle homelessness. The legislation requires local authorities in England to provide advice and assistance to individuals and families who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and apply for help. Authorities have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households who fall into a 'priority need' category.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ 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

⁶⁸ Scottish Government, [Guidance for Local Authorities on Managing Unauthorised Camping by Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland](#), April 2017

⁶⁹ De Montfort University Leicester, [Negotiated Stopping and ABCD: Excerpt from the final evaluation report](#), 17 July 2017

⁷⁰ See Commons Library briefing paper: [Statutory Homelessness in England](#) (SN01164)

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](#) (2006) states that:

Housing authorities are reminded that when drawing up their strategies for preventing and tackling 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.⁷¹

5.5 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 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.⁷² The Government published [Review of housing needs for caravans and houseboats: draft guidance](#) for local authorities in March 2016. A final version of the guidance does not appear to have been published.

⁷¹ DCLG, [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#), July 2006, p17, para 1.5

⁷² Public Bill Committee, 26 November 2015, [c345](#)

6. Planning

6.1 Shortage of Traveller sites

In January 2017, 13% of Traveller caravans were on unauthorised sites.⁷³ 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. Yet 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 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, published by the Chartered Institute of Housing, summarised the issue as follows:

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 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...⁷⁴

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

⁷³ DCLG, *Traveller caravan count: January 2017*, 25 May 2017, table 1

⁷⁴ Chartered Institute of Housing, *Managing and delivering Gypsy and Traveller sites: negotiating conflict* by De Montfort University, and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, December 2016, p5

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.⁷⁵

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, as part of the Affordable Homes Programme, to provide new or refurbished Traveller sites in England.⁷⁶
- A financial incentive to local authorities, through the New Homes Bonus, for the development of authorised Traveller site accommodation.
- Promoting good practice examples of positive engagement between service providers and Gypsies and Travellers.
- 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.⁷⁷

6.2 Planning policy

The Government's planning policies and requirements for Gypsy and Traveller sites are set out in [Planning policy for traveller sites](#), which was last updated in August 2015. It accompanies the March 2012 [National Planning Policy Framework](#) and it 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:

⁷⁵ Chartered Institute of Housing, [Managing and delivering Gypsy and Traveller sites: negotiating conflict](#) by De Montfort University and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, December 2016, p6

⁷⁶ The Affordable Homes Programme is administered by the Homes and Communities Agency in England.

⁷⁷ DCLG, [Reducing Inequalities for Gypsies and Travellers: Progress Report](#), 4 April 2012, Chapter 4

- 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 environment⁷⁸

In a [January 2014 Written Ministerial Statement](#) the Coalition Government sought to re-emphasise existing policy that "unmet need, whether for traveller sites or for conventional housing, is unlikely to outweigh harm to the green belt and other harm to constitute the "very special circumstances" justifying inappropriate development in the green belt".⁷⁹

6.3 Recovery of planning appeals in the green belt

The Written Statement also confirmed that the Secretary of State would continue with his pledge to recover more planning appeals relating to Traveller sites in green belt land for his own determination. Following a legal challenge, 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. In August 2015 the Government [subsequently said](#) that it would "consider the recovery of a proportion of relevant appeals in the Green Belt for the Secretary of State's decision".⁸⁰

6.4 Definition of Traveller for planning policy

In September 2014 the Coalition Government published, [Consultation: planning and travellers](#), which proposed to change the definition of "Traveller" for planning related purposes so that it would exclude those who have permanently ceased from travelling.⁸¹ This change came into

⁷⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government, [Planning policy for traveller sites](#), updated 31 August 2015

⁷⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government and The Rt Hon Brandon Lewis MP, [Written statement to Parliament: Green belt](#), 17 January 2014

⁸⁰ Letter to Chief Planning Officers in England from the Chief Planner DCLG, [Green Belt protection and intentional unauthorised development](#), 31 August 2015

⁸¹ HM Government, [Consultation: planning and travellers](#), 14 September 2014

force from August 2015 following the issue of a revised version of [Planning policy for traveller sites](#).

6.5 Intentional unauthorised occupation of land

The Coalition Government's 2014 consultation also 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.⁸²

This change in planning policy was taken forward and introduced by means of a [letter](#) from the Government's Chief Planner to planning officers in England dated 31 August 2015. It was later reaffirmed in a written statement to the House, [Work of the Department during the Summer Recess: Written statement - HCWS195](#), 14 September 2015.

The Commons Library briefing paper [Gypsies and travellers: planning provisions](#) (SN07005) provides further information on planning policy for Traveller sites, and the changes made by the Coalition Government.

6.6 The Traveller Movement reaction

The Traveller Movement has expressed concern that the changes to planning policy for Traveller sites will 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 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.⁸³

6.7 Progress on provision of Traveller sites

The advocacy group, Friends Families and Travellers (FFT), undertook research using Freedom of Information requests in May and June 2016

⁸² HM Government, [Consultation: planning and travellers](#), 14 September 2014, section 4.10

⁸³ The Traveller Movement, [Government changes to Planning Policy for Traveller sites](#), September 2015

designed to ascertain if 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 its findings as follows:

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 2,033 a total of 1,745 additional pitches are needed in the South East of England.⁸⁴

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.⁸⁵

The FFT called for the Government to monitor local authority compliance with its planning policy and to introduce statutory targets:

FFT recommends that the government monitors compliance with the requirement in PPTS [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites] to have a 5 year supply of deliverable sites and acts to ensure the requirement is met. FFT also recommends that the government re-introduce targets, and a statutory duty to meet the assessed accommodation need of Gypsies and Travellers, as introduced in Wales in March 2016 (section 103 Part 3, Housing (Wales) Act 2014).⁸⁶

In September 2016, the specialist publication, [Planning](#), reported that some councils had found that the new definition of what constituted a "Traveller" in planning policy had slowed councils' progress in planning for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and led authorities to revisit their need assessments.⁸⁷ The [Travellers' Times](#) has reported concerns that the new definition could be used by local authorities to reduce the number of Traveller sites that they will have to plan for.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Friends Families and Travellers, [Research on the five year supply of deliverable Gypsy and Traveller sites in the South East](#), 2016

⁸⁵ The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, [Research into Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Supply](#), 2016

⁸⁶ Friends Families and Travellers, [Research on the five year supply of deliverable Gypsy and Traveller sites in the South East](#), 2016

⁸⁷ 'Why progress is slow in planning for Gypsy and traveller sites', [Planning](#) [subscription required], 9 September 2016

⁸⁸ "New gypsy status' definition begins to bite as councils use it to 'deny Gypsies and Travellers homes'", [Travellers' Times Online](#), 25 January 2016

7. 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 in terms of 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).⁸⁹

The NIHB called for more effective local action to address these concerns. This included encouraging better local planning and commissioning of services, and improving access to them.

Guidance on addressing the health needs of vulnerable groups, including Gypsies and Travellers, was developed under the DH-sponsored inclusion health programme. [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 are 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 research findings:

- 42% of English Gypsies are affected by a long-term condition, as opposed to 18% of the general population.
- Higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression.
- Considerably higher numbers of smokers in the Gypsy Traveller population – (57%) compared to matched comparators (21.5%).⁹⁰

⁸⁹ The National Inclusion Health Board (NIHB): [Inclusion Health Board report Hidden Needs: Identifying Key Vulnerable Groups in Data Collections](#) (2014)

⁹⁰ [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 \(2004\)](#).

It also reported evidence of higher rates of stillbirth, infant mortality and maternal death, that Gypsies and Travellers have the poorest self-reported health and provide more unpaid care than any other ethnic minority.⁹¹ 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 Inclusion Health 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.

7.1 Policies to address health needs

In 2016 the National Inclusion Health Board (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.

[Inclusion of Gypsy Traveller health needs in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments: A review](#) (2015) also provided guidance on addressing the health needs of Gypsies and Travellers. It called on Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs)⁹² to include analysis of Gypsies' and Travellers' health needs in their Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (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.⁹³

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

In September 2013, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Department of Health's National Inclusion Health Board produced a toolkit on commissioning for socially excluded groups. This aimed at widening access to health services and improving the health outcomes

⁹¹ ONS, Ethnic variations in general health and unpaid care provision, 2011

⁹² 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.

⁹³ Friends, Families and Travellers, [Inclusion of Gypsy Traveller health needs in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments: A review](#), 2015

of marginalised groups, looking specifically at 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.⁹⁴

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. On 1 March 2017 NHS England launched a new leaflet designed for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, to complement the guidance issued in 2015 to GP practices about registering patients from vulnerable groups.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Royal College of General Practitioners, [Improving access to health care for Gypsies and Travellers, homeless people and sex workers \(September 2013\)](#), p22

⁹⁵ NHS England Leaflet, [Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Communities: How to register with a doctor \(GP\)](#) [Accessed 8 August 2017]

8. Education

8.1 Educational attainment

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.

Nationally, in 2016, 53% of all pupils reached the expected standard in all of English reading, writing and mathematics. Of children identifying as Gypsy/Roma, 13% met the expected standard. For those identifying as Irish Travellers, the figure was 18%.⁹⁶

At the end of compulsory schooling (key stage 4) the attainment gap remains wide. In 2016, 18% of pupils from Irish Traveller backgrounds attained 5 GCSEs (or equivalents) at grades A* to C, including English and maths. The figure for pupils identifying as Gypsy/ Roma was 9%. Nationally, 57% of pupils attained these qualifications.⁹⁷

8.2 LKMco report on GRT pupils in higher education 2017

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.

The report cites data on school-level attainment and progress suggesting much lower rates of attainment for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller 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".⁹⁸

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 [...]".⁹⁹

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

⁹⁶ Department for Education, [National curriculum assessments: key stage 2, 2016 \(revised\)](#), last updated 22 June 2017.

⁹⁷ Department for Education, [Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2015 to 2016](#), updated 14 July 2017.

⁹⁸ LKMco, [The underrepresentation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in higher education](#), 8 July 2017, p5

⁹⁹ Ibid.

- 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.¹⁰⁰

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 debt¹⁰¹

8.3 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 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.¹⁰²

Home education

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 age¹⁰³ must 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 do this. The local authority is not under a

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Department for Education, [School attendance](#), November 2016, p12

¹⁰³ Children become 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.

statutory duty to monitor parents who have decided to electively home educate their children, but they are required to identify any children who are missing from education.

The LKMco report covered in Section 8.2 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.¹⁰⁴ 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.¹⁰⁵

8.4 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 managed 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 classes¹⁰⁶ 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'.

8.5 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

¹⁰⁴ 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

¹⁰⁵ Lane, P., et. al./ Anglia Ruskin University, [Gypsy, Traveller and Roma: Experts by experience](#), October 2014, p30

¹⁰⁶ 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.¹⁰⁷

The DfE's [Statistical First Release](#) on school exclusions in 2015/16 notes that:

Pupils of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage ethnic groups had the highest rates of both permanent and fixed period exclusions, but as the population is relatively small these figures should be treated with some caution.¹⁰⁸

8.6 Funding educational services for GTR 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.

¹⁰⁷ Department for Education, [School exclusion](#), September 2017 (in force 1 September 2017), p11

¹⁰⁸ Department for Education, [Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions in England: 2015 to 2016](#), SFR 35/2017, 20 July 2017

9. Employment and training

9.1 Employment

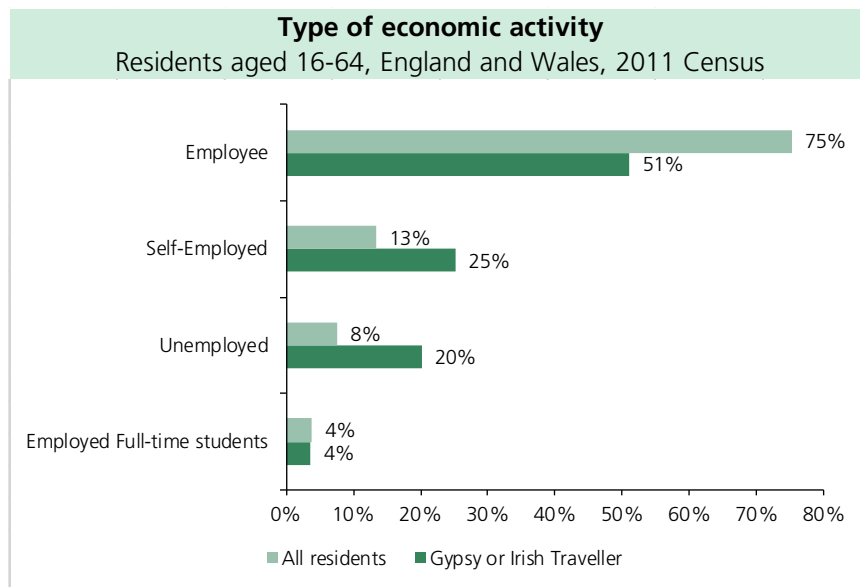
The 2011 Census found that Gypsy or Irish Traveller was the ethnic group with the lowest employment rates and highest levels of economic inactivity. Of those who were economically active, Gypsies and Irish Travellers were also most likely to be unemployed.

Of those aged between 16 and 64 and resident in England or Wales:

- 40% of Gypsies or Irish Travellers 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 lowest employment rate; other ethnic groups with less than a 50% employment rate were Arab (42%), Bangladeshi (48%) and Pakistani (49%).
- 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 unemployed but actively seeking and available for work). 50% of Gypsy or Irish Travellers were economically active, compared to 77% for all residents. 50% of Arabs were also economically active.
- 10% of Gypsies and Irish Travellers were unemployed. Although higher than the average for all residents (6%), this was lower than some of the other ethnic groups: the highest levels were in the White and Black Caribbean and Other Black groups (14%).¹⁰⁹

Type of economic activity¹¹⁰

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



¹⁰⁹ Office for National Statistics, [2011 Census analysis: Ethnicity and the Labour Market, England and Wales](#), 13 November 2014, table 1

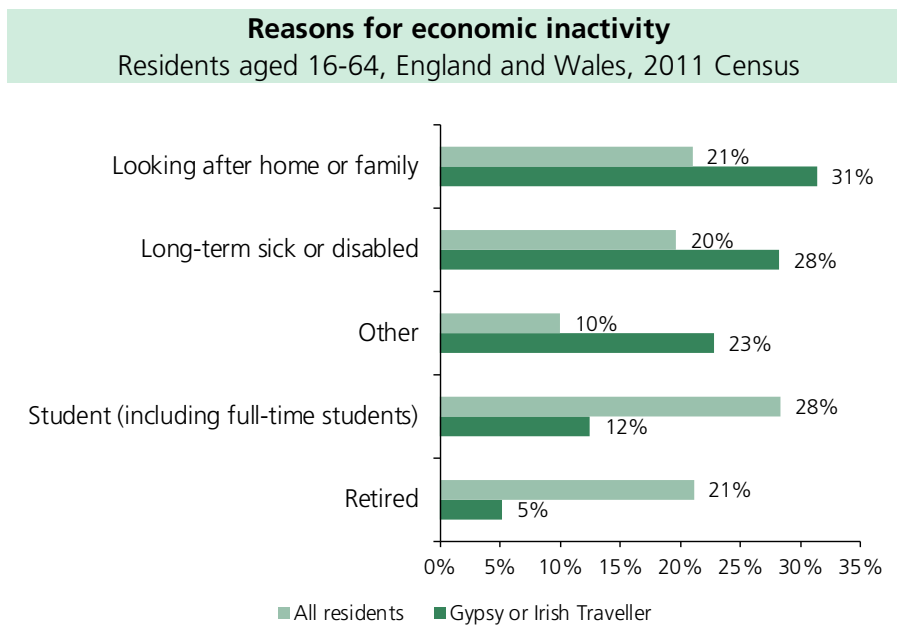
¹¹⁰ Ibid

Economically active Gypsies and Irish Travellers were the most likely to be unemployed of all the ethnic groups, along with the White and Black Caribbean and Other Black ethnic groups. 20% of economically active residents in these ethnic groups were unemployed, compared to 8% of all residents.

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

Reasons for economic inactivity¹¹¹

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 and 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 and 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 and Irish Travellers were likewise. 43% of inactive residents in the Mixed, Asian, Black or Other ethnic groups were students.

Only 5% of Gypsies and 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

¹¹¹ Office for National Statistics, [2011 Census analysis: Ethnicity and the Labour Market, England and Wales](#), 13 November 2014, table 1

inactive also being retired. The majority of the other ethnic groups had a similar proportion who were retired as for Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

Occupation¹¹²

2011 Census data revealed that Gypsies and Irish Travellers were more likely to be working in Elementary Occupations (22% of those aged 16 and over did so, 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 and 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 and 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.

9.2 Training

840 Gypsies and Irish Travellers started apprenticeships in England in the five years between 2011/12 and 2015/16, with between 150 and 200 starting in each academic year. Over this period, there were 2.5 million apprenticeship starts in total, meaning 0.03% of all apprenticeship starts were Gypsy or Irish Traveller apprentices.¹¹³

There are no Government policies specifically targeting Gypsies and Irish Travellers to take up apprenticeships. In his reply to PQ HL4110 of 13 December 2016 on how the Government was encouraging young people from the Gypsy and Traveller community into apprenticeships, Lord Nash said that the “government is committed to ensuring that apprenticeships are as accessible as possible to all people from all backgrounds”.¹¹⁴

The PQ answer referred to various measures, including the ‘[Get In Go Far](#)’ campaign, which is a campaign aimed at encouraging 14-24 year-olds to become apprentices. The Government is also aiming to increase the number of traineeships, as these will support people to move into apprenticeships or into work. Finally, the PQ mentions that extra funding will be provided to employers and training providers for 16-18 year-olds and 19-24 year-olds formerly in care or with an Education, Health and Care Plan, as well as providing extra funding for those apprentices who live in disadvantaged areas.

¹¹² 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

¹¹³ Department for Education and Skills Funding Agency, [FE data library: apprenticeships](#)

¹¹⁴ [PQ HL 4110](#), 13 December 2016

Get In Go Far was launched in August 2014 and has not had an evident impact on the number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers starting apprenticeships. In both 2014/15 and 2015/16 there were 180 starts by Gypsies and Irish Travellers, slightly up from the 150 in 2013/14 but almost equal to the number of starts in 2011/12. The funding changes were only introduced in April 2017 so it is too early to tell whether they will have any effect on the number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers starting apprenticeships.

30 Gypsies and Irish Travellers started traineeships in England in the years 2013/14 and 2014/15. Almost 30,000 traineeships were started in total.¹¹⁵

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.¹¹⁶

9.3 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.¹¹⁷

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.

¹¹⁵ Department for Education and Skills Funding Agency, [FE data library: other statistics and research](#)

¹¹⁶ [Written Answers](#), 24 March 2014, Column WA87

¹¹⁷ DCLG, [Reducing Inequalities for Gypsies and Travellers: Progress Report](#), 4 April 2012, Chapter 7

- 4 The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain will represent Gypsies and Travellers on the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group.¹¹⁸

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.¹¹⁹

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”.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ DEP 2014-1503 -Deposited House of Lords - 11 November 2014

¹²⁰ www.gov.uk, [Ethnic Minority Employment Stakeholder Group](#) [Accessed 8 August 2017]

10. 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.¹²¹ 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.¹²²

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.¹²³ 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".¹²⁴ This guidance is not in the public domain.

10.1 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

¹²¹ 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

¹²² DCLG, [Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers](#), April 2012, para 7.2

¹²³ Ibid, para 7.7

¹²⁴ [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”.¹²⁵

Potential problems Gypsies and Travellers might face with the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) include:¹²⁶

- 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 an option to receive UC via the “Simple Payment” system).
- 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).

The household benefit cap¹²⁷ and restrictions on support for third and subsequent children born after April 2017¹²⁸ could also have a disproportionate impact, given that Gypsies and Travellers traditionally have larger families than the settled population.

¹²⁵ Irish Traveller Movement in Britain and Leeds GATE, [Impact of Universal Credit and welfare reforms on the Gypsy and Traveller communities](#), May 2013, p4

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ See Commons Library briefing paper, [The benefit cap \(SN06294\)](#), 23 November 2016

¹²⁸ See Commons Library briefing paper, [The two child limit in tax credits and Universal Credit \(CBP-7935\)](#), 10 April 2016

11. 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.¹²⁹ 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.

11.1 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.¹³⁰ It concluded that these may have affected both interactions with staff and “some prisoners’ willingness to identify as Gypsy or Traveller”.¹³¹

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.¹³²

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 2011-12.¹³³

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”.¹³⁴ 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

¹²⁹ 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

¹³⁰ DCLG, [Reducing Inequalities for Gypsies and Travellers: Progress Report](#), 4 April 2012, chapter 6

¹³¹ Ibid, p26

¹³² HMIP, [People in prison: Gypsies, Romany and Travellers A findings paper by HM Inspectorate of Prisons](#) February 2014

¹³³ Ibid, paras 1.11-1.15

¹³⁴ Ibid, para 1.20

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”.¹³⁵ The report also highlighted poor outcomes:

Our surveys support assertions in other literature that the Gypsy, Romany and Traveller group are experiencing poorer outcomes 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.¹³⁶

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.¹³⁷

11.2 Youth justice

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons conducts annual reviews of Children in Custody, and the most recent, published in November 2016, showed that 12% said they were from a Gypsy, Romany or Traveller background:

Of those children detained in STCs [secure training centres] during 2015–16, 12% considered themselves to be Gypsy, Romany or Traveller. These children were less likely to find it ‘easy’ to keep in contact with their family or carers outside the centre (60% compared with 90%) and more likely to report being victimised by other young people by having their canteen or property taken (37% compared with 7%). [...] Almost a quarter (24%) felt that they were victimised by staff and 17% by other children because they were from a Traveller community.¹³⁸

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:

¹³⁵ Ibid, para 1.36

¹³⁶ Ibid, para 1.37

¹³⁷ Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, [Learning lessons bulletin: Fatal incident investigations issue 7: Deaths of Travellers in Prison](#), 2015, p6

¹³⁸ HMIP, [Children in Custody 2015–16](#), November 2016, p27

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.¹³⁹

The issues were a subject of a Westminster Hall Debate on 1 February 2017.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ The Traveller Movement, [*Overlooked and Overrepresented: Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children in the youth justice system*](#), December 2016, p11

¹⁴⁰ [HC Deb 1 February 2017 cc348-355WH](#)

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