



## Progress Report on Gypsy and Traveller Policy





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# Section 1

## Summary

In its response to the report *The Road Ahead* by the independent Task Group on Site Provision and Enforcement for Gypsies and Travellers, the Government committed to report annually to Parliament on progress on Gypsy and Traveller issues. This is the first such report.

The Government has put in place a framework to help deliver improved site provision for Gypsies and Travellers, together with a range of effective enforcement measures that can be used to tackle inappropriate camping and development. The supply of authorised sites, in appropriate locations, will help address the cycle of eviction that can be costly to authorities but does not address the underlying issue of the need for a home. The supply of accommodation will also help to provide added value to the Government's work on improving the health and educational outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers.

The current position on site delivery remains unsatisfactory. It is clear that local authorities need to increase the pace at which suitable locations are identified that can be used as Gypsy and Traveller sites. Although the Government recognises the difficulties that can arise, it considers that with strong leadership at the local level, authorities can make rapid progress in addressing what is, in numerical and land-use terms, a relatively small level of need. The identification of suitable locations for authorised sites will help to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments can create tensions between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled population.

# Section 2

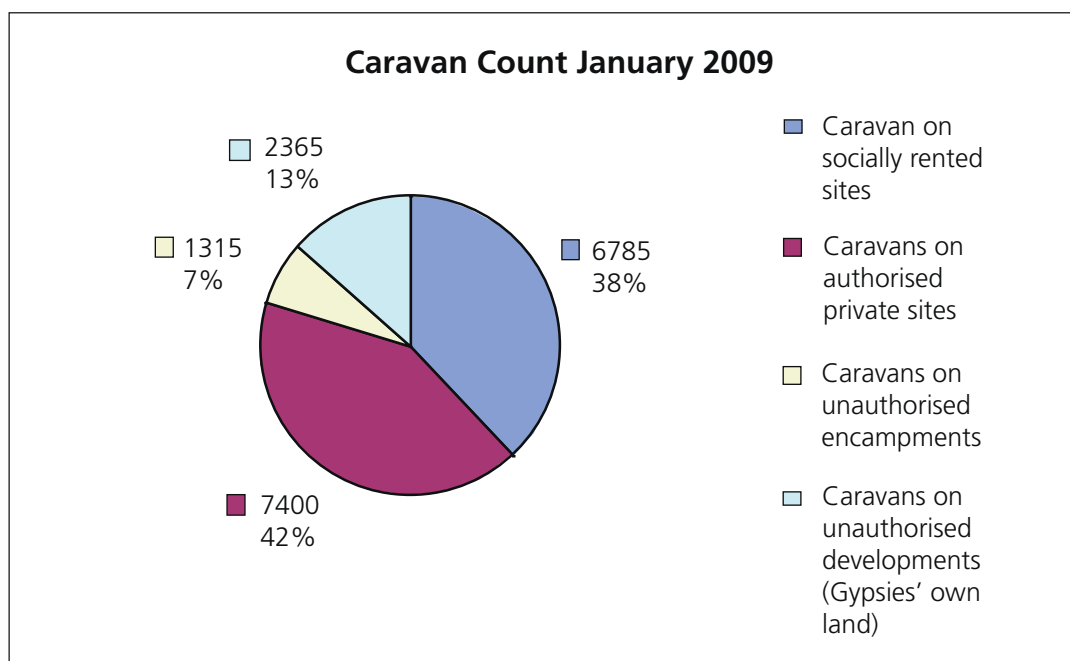
## Background

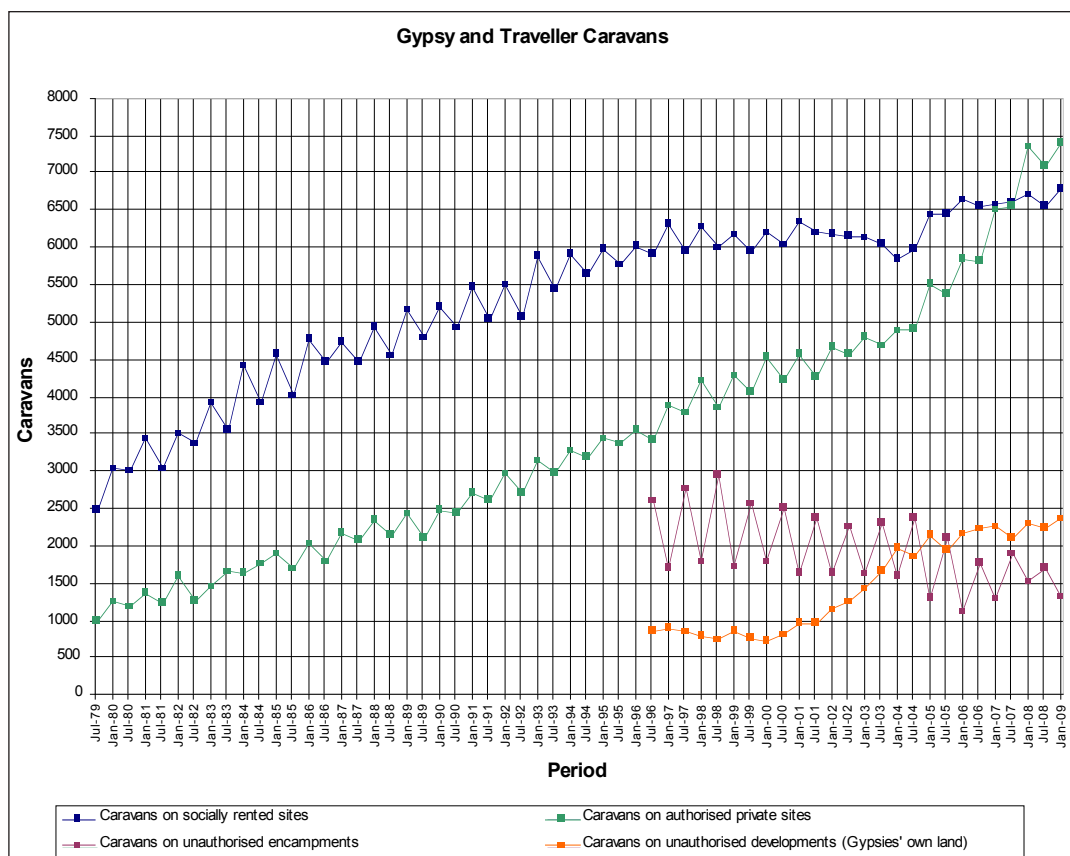
1. During 2006 and 2007, the independent Task Group on Site Provision and Enforcement for Gypsies and Travellers reviewed the issue of site provision for Gypsy and Traveller caravans, and the enforcement powers available to local agencies to tackle unauthorised camping. It published its final report in December 2007. The Group concluded that the policy framework put in place by the Government is broadly right, and that existing enforcement powers are sufficient and, where those powers are used well, enforcement can be rapid and effective.
2. In April 2008, the Government published its response to the Task Group's report. It welcomed the work of the Group, and accepted the recommendations made in its final report. A key recommendation was that an annual progress report should be made to Parliament setting out the progress made on addressing the twin issue of site provision and enforcement. This document is the first of those reports.
3. The Government is committed to strengthening society by building more cohesive, empowered and active communities, whilst at the same time ensuring that growth can be supported where it is needed in the longer term, and at an affordable price. It is within this broader context which the Government develops its policies for Gypsies and Travellers.
4. Since the abolition in 1994 of the duty on local authorities to provide sites, the focus has been on facilitating the ability of Gypsies and Travellers to find and buy their own sites to buy and manage. However, it is important to recognise also that there remains a need for public site provision for those Gypsies and Travellers who are unable to buy and develop their own sites, or prefer to rent.
5. The core policy underpinning the Government's approach to Gypsies and Travellers, as set out in ODPM Circular 01/2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*, is the focus on increasing the supply of authorised sites on which Gypsy and Traveller caravans can be based, combined with strong and effective enforcement measures to tackle unauthorised camping and development.



## Scale of need

6. The Government publishes a Caravan Count twice each year, reflecting the number of caravans in each local authority in January and July. The Count published in January 2009 sets out the most recent figures and shows that the total number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans in England has increased by 0.1 per cent between January 2008 and 2009 to 17,865. By far the greatest proportion of caravans is based on authorised sites – over 79 per cent are on either authorised private sites or socially rented sites.
7. In the same period, the number of caravans on unauthorised encampments, on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers, has decreased by 13 per cent. Conversely, the number of caravans on unauthorised developments (land owned by Gypsies and Travellers but where planning permission has not yet been granted) increased by 3.4 per cent – this amounts to an increase of 78 caravans across the country.





8. Overall, the proportion of caravans that are not on an authorised pitch has reduced slightly recently, from 22 per cent in January 2008, 21 per cent in July 2008 to just over 20 per cent in January 2009.
9. However, that number is still too many for those Gypsy and Traveller families who do not have an authorised pitch, and therefore frequently do not have access to basic services such as electricity, water, and gas, as well as access to health and education services. It is also too many for those local communities and agencies who have to deal with the disturbance caused by unauthorised encampments and developments, and the potential increase in community tensions that can sometimes arise.
10. The consequence of an insufficient supply of authorised sites in suitable locations is that some Gypsies and Travellers might have little choice but to locate in unauthorised encampments on someone else's land. Alternatively, there have been instances where some Gypsies and Travellers have purchased land and begun development prior to seeking planning permission. It is therefore important for local authorities to positively assess and plan for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

## Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments

11. It remains important for local authorities to ensure that full account is taken of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. All local authorities have now taken part in the development of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs). These provide a valuable source of information about the level and type of need for sites and other accommodation in the area. Where these show evidence of clear and immediate need, then local authorities should press forward with the preparation of allocation development plan documents identifying appropriate locations for sites that could accommodate need. The scale of the task should not be over-estimated – the former Commission for Racial Equality estimated that the number of caravans in unauthorised locations in England could be accommodated within one square mile.
12. All local authorities are required under the Housing Act 2004 to undertake Assessments of Need for Gypsies and Travellers. CLG published guidance in 2006 on how to undertake such Assessments.
13. As well as providing a clear picture to local authorities of the level of need in their area for accommodation, information from the first round of GTAAAs has been fed into the regional planning process to help inform the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), and allocation of pitch numbers across regions.
14. The GTAAAs provide an excellent evidence base for those planning for the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. However, it is important to ensure that these assessments are refreshed and kept up to date. Communities and Local Government will review the experiences of the published GTAAAs and consider how any lessons that might be learnt could be reflected in updated guidance for future rounds of accommodation assessments.

## Regional Planning Framework

15. The regional planning process plays a critical role in providing a strategic framework for delivering sufficient numbers of pitches. Different regions are at different stages in ensuring that their RSS reflects the most up to date information on pitch need. The RSS for the East Midlands was published in March 2009 and reflected the information contained in the region's GTAAAs. The Secretary of State is also considering proposed pitch numbers for Gypsy and Traveller sites in the RSS for the South West and Eastern regions following their consideration at Examinations in Public. In the South East, the South East England Partnership Board has submitted to the Secretary of State their proposed amendments to the Regional Spatial Strategy. These will be subject to an Examination in Public.

16. The Government has set out its intention, in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill which is currently before Parliament, to move towards the introduction of new Regional Strategies which will encompass both the spatial and economic strategies in the region. We will ensure that the valuable role played by the regional tier in terms of providing a regional dimension to the need for Gypsies and Traveller sites is reflected upon fully as we develop those proposals.

## Local Development Frameworks (LDF)

17. Documents within the LDF provide the crucial local context against which local authorities plan for development in their areas. ODPM Circular 01/06 highlights the important role played by the LDF in taking account of the need for Gypsy and Traveller sites. Since the publication of Circular 01/06, overall progress on LDFs has been much slower than anticipated. The Government's emphasis now, particularly in the light of the economic downturn, is on the primacy of preparing core strategies. Core strategies set out the overall vision for the area, the strategic objectives for the area, and a delivery strategy for achieving those objectives. The core strategy should set out appropriate criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites. Core strategies provide greater certainty to local communities, and a clearer picture on how development, including of Gypsy and Traveller sites, will be managed.
18. Core strategies also have an important role to play in setting key criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites. These could guide the allocation of sites in any relevant allocations Development Plan Document, as well as the consideration of individual planning applications. Local authorities should also consider, during the preparation of their core strategies, whether Gypsy and Traveller sites should be identified as part of the possible allocation of strategic sites for development.
19. Where local authorities have adopted core strategies, they should also give serious consideration to whether to prepare an Allocations Development Plan Document which can identify potential locations for development, including for Gypsy and Traveller sites, if they are not already included within the core strategy. This will be particularly important for those authorities where there is a clear and pressing need for sites. Where there is clear and immediate need for Gypsy and Traveller sites, local authorities will want to consider the benefits of proactively planning for development either through the identification of sites in the core strategy, or through an Allocations Development Plan Document.

# Section 3

## Supply of pitches

### Applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites

20. Historically, there has been limited data available setting out the way in which applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites have been dealt with by local planning authorities. This made it more difficult to assess whether the Government's policies for increasing the provision of authorised sites is being reflected in the manner in which applications for planning permission are being determined.
21. This issue was also raised by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in its report "Simple Solutions for Living Together" published in March 2009. The Commission identified the need for government to gather robust data on accommodation provision.
22. The Government had already established the need for better data and, from 1 April 2008, local authorities have reported on the way in which they determine planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites for incorporation within the Statistical Release on Planning Applications.
23. The Statistical Release published on 26 June 2009 provided details of applications for Gypsy and Traveller pitches across England between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009. This confirmed that, contrary to a commonly held assumption, the proportion of applications that were granted permission, was similar to the proportion of permissions granted for housing developments of a similar scale.
24. In the year to 31 March 2009, 69 per cent of applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites of 10 or more pitches (or over 0.5 acre) were granted planning permission. This compared to 65 per cent of housing developments of a similar scale receiving planning permission. For developments below the level of 10 units, 63 per cent of applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites were granted permission, compared to 64 per cent of other housing developments.
25. At this stage, the overall number of applications for pitches is still relatively low, and it is not possible to draw out any trends but these statistics provide a degree of assurance that the outcome of applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites is broadly comparable to the outcome of applications for housing developments of similar scale. The views of some in the Gypsy and Traveller community that making an

application is likely to lead to automatic refusal is not therefore borne out by the evidence. The Department will continue to monitor the data, both to establish any trends, as well as any particular pressure points where there may be higher numbers of applications, or outcomes at odds with the general picture.

26. It is also important to recognise that these figures relate to a relatively small data set – only 191 planning applications in England over the course of the year.

## Planning appeals

27. The Planning Inspectorate processes a range of appeals submitted under planning legislation following decisions issued by local planning authorities. In the two years prior to the introduction of Circular 01/06 on 2 February 2006, 68 per cent of appeals relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites were dismissed. In the following two years, 65 per cent of appeals were granted planning permission.
28. However, behind these headline statistics, it is important to consider the extent to which these permissions are permanent, as opposed to being for a time-limited period. The perception from many Gypsy and Traveller groups is that a great number of permissions are of a temporary nature and that, as a result, there is a limited degree of residential security given that it might be necessary to move from the site in the near future.
29. Communities and Local Government has reviewed a sample of decisions on 178 appeals made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 during the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009. A total of 27 per cent of these appeals were granted permanent planning permission. This is broadly comparable to the outcomes of planning appeals relating to minor residential development where 29 per cent of appeals were allowed in the same period. A further 27 per cent of Gypsy and Traveller site proposals heard on appeal were granted permission subject to a condition restricting the use of the site as a Gypsy and Traveller site for a temporary period. We will continue to review planning appeals relating to proposals for Gypsy and Traveller sites to monitor the effectiveness of the Government's policies and to have a clear picture of the number of temporary permissions granted.
30. It will be important for local authorities, when they assess the level of need for accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers as part of their Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments, to take account of the changes in site supply arising from planning permissions, whether granted by the local authority, or on appeal by the Secretary of State. In doing so, it will be especially important for authorities to take account of any permissions that might be of a temporary nature and scheduled to expire during the timeframe covered by the assessments of potential future need.

# Section 4

## Tackling unauthorised developments

### Unauthorised development

31. The Caravan Count identifies that there has been a small increase in the number of caravans on unauthorised sites owned by Gypsies and Travellers but where planning permission has not yet been granted. The increase of 78 caravans amounts to an increase of 3.4 per cent since January 2008, to 2,365 caravans. While 55 per cent of these caravans are on sites that are “tolerated” by the local authority, there is no doubt that such sites can on occasion cause great disruption to the local population and increase the potential risk of tensions between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled population. Such developments also raise concern amongst many that some in the Gypsy and Traveller population do not abide by the planning system.
32. There has been a number of cases reported recently of developments of Gypsy and Traveller sites where planning applications have been submitted to the local authority just as it was closing, and too late for any action to be taken to prevent development taking place over the course of the weekend.
33. There is nothing to prevent anyone from submitting a retrospective planning application. The Task Group on Site Provision and Enforcement explored whether this option should be retained. It concluded that the removal of the ability to make retrospective applications would cause more problems than it would solve since anyone who unintentionally breached planning control would be affected by such a change. Similarly, it considered whether development of land without planning permission could become a criminal offence. It concluded that such a change was not needed given the penalties that could be applied if a developer breached an enforcement notice in relation to development that did not have planning permission – a fine not exceeding £20,000.
34. Notwithstanding this, it is the Government’s view that the planning process should be open and transparent to all. ODPM Circular 1/06 sets out the Government’s planning policies on Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites and makes clear that pre-application discussions are particularly helpful to avoid misunderstanding and subsequent problems over planning permission. Constructive and positive engagement on all sites will help to promote trust, and may help to avoid breaches of planning control.

35. In this respect, the Guidance makes clear also that Gypsies and Travellers should consult with local planning authorities before acquiring land for development. This will enable them to gain a better understanding of any potential planning constraints that might affect the development potential of the site.
36. The Task Group looked at the enforcement powers that were available to tackle unauthorised siting of Gypsy and Traveller caravans. It concluded that the range of powers available was sufficient and that when used effectively, can be efficient and rapid. However, it recognised that the use of these powers was mixed.
37. The Government has published a package of guidance to local authorities and other agencies involved in taking enforcement action:
  - *Local Authorities and Gypsies and Travellers – A guide to responsibilities and powers*
  - *Guide to effective use of enforcement powers Part 1: Unauthorised encampments;*
  - *Guide to effective use of enforcement powers Part 2: Unauthorised Development of Caravan Sites.*
38. These publications draw attention to the range of powers that are available, and the circumstances within which they could be used. The Government is confident that, used appropriately, and in conjunction with a proactive approach from local authorities in identifying appropriate locations for Gypsy and Traveller sites, these powers can be used effectively to tackle those incidences of unauthorised development and camping that can have a detrimental impact on local communities.
39. The Government has also introduced Temporary Stop Notices which, when used effectively by local authorities, can be issued immediately to stop unauthorised development rapidly and successfully.
40. In addition, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) issued new guidance on unauthorised encampments at the beginning of 2009. The purpose of the guidance is to assist the police response to Gypsies and Travellers camping on land as trespassers and works towards the development of normal relations between Gypsies and Travellers and settled communities. The guidance was formally launched on 16th January 2009, and has been publicised across all Forces in England and Wales. The guidance sets out the issues that chief officers should consider when making decisions on the use of police powers.



## Community cohesion – conflict resolution

41. The Government recognises that tensions can sometimes arise as local authorities take forward work to identify possible locations for Gypsy and Traveller sites. These tensions can lead to confrontational exchanges as the planning process is progressed, leading to the development of more entrenched positions on both sites. This can lead to protracted planning delays, which fails to deliver suitable pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and extends the period of uncertainty for local communities.
42. Communities and Local Government has been working with experienced neighbourhood mediation advisers, in conjunction with a local authority, to identify and develop best practice guidance, covering the planning process from the initial identification of possible site locations, effective public consultation strategies and methods through to a planning hearing. It is aimed to issue a toolkit for local authorities later in 2009.

## Guidance on tackling anti-social behaviour

43. It is sometimes reported that, following the establishment of Gypsy and Traveller sites, there will be a rise in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour. While there may be individual elements in the Gypsy and Traveller community that may be involved in such behaviour, there is absolutely no substantive evidence that the level of such behaviour is any more significant than in other groups, or in the population as a whole.
44. However, the reporting of cases where such activity does take place can sometimes lead to a misconception that all Gypsies and Travellers are involved in criminal or antisocial behaviour. That is not the case at all. Indeed, Gypsies and Travellers are often the victims of such behaviour, or at the receiving end of racist behaviour or language.
45. The Government is therefore producing, as supported by the independent Task Group, a guide to how anti-social behaviour can be tackled whether it is perpetrated by Gypsies and Travellers or whether it is directed at them. The Government aims to publish the Guide later this year.

# Section 5

## Site delivery

### Homes and Communities Agency

46. The Government has made available substantial funding during the period 2008-2011 to facilitate the development of new and refurbished pitches. This funding is available to fund the capital costs of new pitches, deliver extensions to existing sites and to refurbish existing sites.
47. Following the establishment of the Homes and Communities Agency on 1 December 2008, the Government transferred responsibility for management of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant to the Agency. This will enable the Agency to take advantage of its overall broader responsibilities for housing delivery, and to ensure that the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is incorporated into its single conversation with stakeholders across each of the regions.

### Site design

48. The Government believes that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home – this is true for settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities alike. However, there has been a multiplicity of practice in the way that Gypsy and Traveller sites have been developed and evolved. As a result, the Government published in May 2008 a good practice guide to *Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites*. The purpose of this is to ensure that sites:
  - are sustainable, safe and easy to manage and maintain
  - are of a decent standard, equitable to that which would be expected for social housing in the settled community; and
  - support harmonious relations between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled population.
49. The guide is aimed primarily at those agencies, primarily local authorities and Registered Social Landlords, who deliver socially rented sites. It will also be a relevant consideration in the way that bids for Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant are assessed. However, the advice will also be pertinent in the way that private sites are developed, whether as permanent residential sites, transit sites or as temporary stopping places.

## Site management guidance

50. The Government considers that site provision is a key element of tackling the shortfall of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and reducing the incidence of unauthorised camping and development. However, it recognises also that it is important for sites that are provided to be well managed, to help ensure that the site can provide appropriate and well maintained pitches that are attractive to the Gypsy and Traveller community.
51. Following a process of consultation with stakeholders, the Government has published in July 2009 a guide to good practice in site management. Where sites are properly managed, they can be successful, self-financing and sustainable, helping to ensure that the Gypsy and Traveller community on site can live peacefully with the settled community nearby.

## Improvements to security of tenure on public Gypsy and Traveller sites

52. The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 provided the power to enable the Government to tackle the long-standing anomaly that Gypsy and Traveller residents on local authority sites did not have any security of tenure. The Government has consulted on how it will take forward the relevant secondary legislation to bring Gypsy and Traveller sites within the remit of the Mobile Homes Act and thereby provide the appropriate security of tenure for tenants of Gypsy and Traveller pitches on public sites. It is anticipated that these regulations will be laid in the House during 2009 to come into effect as soon as reasonable thereafter.

## Section 6

# The health of Gypsies and Travellers

### Evidence

53. Although evidence on the health status of Gypsies and Travellers has been hard to come by, two reports have focused on the issue. In 2002, the South West Public Health Observatory reviewed the various small scale research studies that had been published to date. In 2004, the University of Sheffield, under a commission from the Department of Health, published the results of research which compared, in a robust way, the health status of Gypsies and Travellers with the health status of a number of comparator communities. The broad findings were that:

- the overall health status of Gypsies and Travellers is relatively poor in comparison with other disadvantaged groups and very poor compared with the general population
- certain health conditions and illnesses are significant for Gypsy and Traveller adults; these include anxiety, asthma, bronchitis, depression, and long-term illness
- there are significant health issues for children, many relating to lack of immunisation
- in addition, there are considerable risks to mothers and their babies leading up to, at, or just after birth
- life expectancy may be very low. (One study in Leeds revealed a life expectancy of 50 years.)

### Access to healthcare

54. Despite these health problems, access to healthcare is often difficult for Gypsies and Travellers. For example, many Gypsies and Travellers feel that health workers, including GPs and their staff, have a poor understanding of their needs, circumstances and culture. Furthermore:

- preventive care and screening may be inadequate
- access to initial or continuing healthcare can be very limited for Gypsies and Travellers, sometimes hampered by a lack of medical records
- in particular, Gypsies and Travellers report considerable problems in registering

with GPs and/or receiving appropriate care from GP practices

- as a result, many Gypsies and Travellers tend to make greater use of Accident & Emergency services for basic health needs than the general population.

55. The Department of Health has engaged with Gypsy and Traveller community members, organisations that represent Gypsies and Travellers, and various NHS organisations to discuss appropriate action.

## Pacesetters

56. As part of its Pacesetters Programme, the Department of Health has begun to trial innovative approaches to some of the more deep-seated health access problems experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. This work centres on:

- raising awareness of Gypsies' and Travellers' health needs and circumstances among NHS professionals
- raising awareness among community members of the potential of the NHS to help them
- improving GP registration and access to the NHS in general; and
- improving the recording and sharing of health information of individual community members.

Learning and good practice will be disseminated widely to the NHS.

57. Already, some exciting and innovative projects have commenced, including the employment of Gypsy and Traveller community members, on a sessional basis, to act as Health Ambassadors between the NHS and local communities in the East Midlands. Two other Strategic Health Authorities – NHS West Midlands and NHS South East Coast – and selected trusts from their areas – are developing a personal health record, to be updated by health professionals, that community members can carry with them. To guide and comment on the work, the Department of Health has funded the establishment of a Quality Assurance Group comprised of community members from each of the six SHA areas taking part in Pacesetters. The University of Sheffield has been hired to evaluate this Pacesetters work.

## Primary Care Service Framework

58. The Department of Health has commissioned NHS Primary Care Commissioning to produce a Primary Care Service Framework for Gypsies and Travellers as part of the Department's work to develop such frameworks for transient populations. These frameworks provide guidance, advice and support to help Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and other NHS organisations to effectively commission and provide quality services, and reduce health inequalities. The Gypsy and Traveller framework was written in consultation with community members and other NHS stakeholders. The framework was published in May 2009, and will be disseminated widely throughout the NHS.
59. The Primary Care Service Framework for Gypsies and Travellers is not about queue jumping. Rather it provides PCTs with good practice suggestions on how to improve access to the NHS for Gypsies and Travellers, and in so doing improve their health with its very low base. It is not intended for the enhancements set out in the framework to work to the detriment of other patients, whose health needs should continue to be met as quickly and effectively as possible.

## Funding for health projects

60. Through the Third Sector Investment Programme, the Department of Health will fund two voluntary sector organisations to commence important pieces of work in 2009/10 to improve the health status of Gypsies and Travellers.
61. Friends, Families and Travellers (based in East Sussex) will set up three centres of excellence to bring together local communities, the NHS and other stakeholders to agree action to improve access for, services delivered to, Gypsies and Travellers. The centres of excellences will be based in the voluntary sector, and located in South East England, South West England and the East of England.
62. Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange will develop a tool-kit for use by primary care trusts in Yorkshire to help them better understand local Gypsy and Traveller communities and plan to respond to their needs. The tool-kit will be developed in partnership with local communities. Both these projects have national relevance, and results will be disseminated nationally.

## Section 7

### Educational outcomes for Gypsy and Traveller children

63. Gypsy and Traveller children have the poorest outcomes of any group in terms of success rates at GCSE level. The Government continues to review its educational policies to tackle this outcome.

#### Changes to the local authority performance target setting process

64. In January 2009, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) made changes to the way local authorities set targets from the academic year 2010/11. From that year the authority must set a performance target for key Stage 2 and 4 pupils where there are age cohorts of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) pupils of 3 or more within the authority. The age cohort size for other minority ethnic groups for which local authority must set targets remains at '30 or more'. This reduction in cohort size for GRT pupils is another attempt to raise the awareness amongst local authorities of the continuing underachievement of GRT pupils in comparison to their peers. This in turn will help authorities to target their resources where it is most needed.

#### Extension of the GRT Achievement Programme

65. This year, the cross-phase, National Strategies-managed Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme was expanded and now involves 21 local authorities working together to offer targeted support to meet the aspirations of GRT pupils. The programme's priorities are: effective use of data; improving Quality First teaching; developing parent/community partnerships; transfer and transition; and, behaviour and attendance.

## E learning and Mobility Programme (ELAMP)

66. DCSF continues to fund the ELAMP programme, which now involves 50 local authorities and over 1,000 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. The programme provides distance learning opportunities to pupils from travelling families. The programme supplies participating pupils with laptops and data cards which enables them to keep in touch with their base school whilst travelling.

## Research on the educational experience of Gypsy and Traveller children

67. A three year research study is being carried out by NfER. The study, which began in September 2007 and makes its final report in 2010, is examining the current educational experiences of a sample of GRT pupils and will make recommendations on how education related processes might be improved to raise attainment and attendance of these pupils. NfER will publish an interim report in summer 2010 which will highlight the good working practice they have observed during the course of their study.



# Section 8

## **GRT History Month (GRTHM)**

68. The National Association of Teachers of Travellers and other professions (NATT+) has been awarded funding from DCSF's Children, Young People and Families grant scheme to organise this year's GRTHM. The month was launched at a reception hosted by Lord Avebury and Julie Morgan MP in the House of Lords on 1 June.
69. Additional funding was provided to the Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT) to undertake local community projects in Cumbria schools and at Appleby Fair to promote an understanding of GRT Culture and their history to the settled community.
70. Throughout June 2009, celebratory events took place within GRT communities nationwide. These events included 'Pavee' Ceildh's organised by the Irish Traveller communities in London and Manchester, the Baro Ziro Festival for young Travellers at Doncaster, and Exhibitions of Gypsy Roma and Traveller Photography and Art throughout the United Kingdom.

## Section 9

### 2011 Census

71. The Office for National Statistics is recommending the inclusion of a tick box category for Gypsy or Irish Traveller in response to the ethnic group question in the 2011 Census, and this will be included in the rehearsal taking place in October 2009. Final recommendations to Parliament will be made in autumn 2009. The inclusion of such a category in the 2011 Census will provide a clear signal to other bodies, including local authorities and the NHS as well as other public bodies to review their ethnic monitoring systems to include "Gypsy or Irish Traveller" as a category, and use the resulting data for better planning and commissioning.

# Section 10

## Conclusion

72. The Government has made considerable progress in putting in place a framework of support to Gypsies and Travellers. The focus is now on delivery and ensuring that action is taken forward, on site supply in particular, but also in measures aimed at helping the Gypsy and Traveller community improve its overall level of health, and in improving the educational outcomes of its children. Local agencies, particularly local authorities, have a key role to play in this respect.



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