



# A gender budgeting analysis of Scottish Gypsy/Traveller sites



Scottish  
Women's  
Budget  
Group



Equality and  
Human Rights

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# Acknowledgements

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Credit to Shirell Johnson, MECOPP Women's Voices Project for all photos used in this report.





# Introduction

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In 2001 the Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC) published its 'Inquiry into Gypsy/Travellers and Public Sector Policies'. This inquiry 'represented a milestone and a crucial step in Scottish politics in relation to Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers.'<sup>1</sup>

Since 2001 there have been multiple inquiries and reports produced looking at what is needed to improve outcomes for the Gypsy/Traveller community in Scotland the impact of which are questionable.

**This joint project between the Scottish Women's Budget Group (SWBG) and MECOPP aimed to:**



**explore how local and national budget/policy decisions impact on Gypsy/Traveller women and their families;**



**identify differences and gaps in public spending for culturally appropriate housing and education for Gypsy/Travellers across Scotland.**



# What we did

# What we did

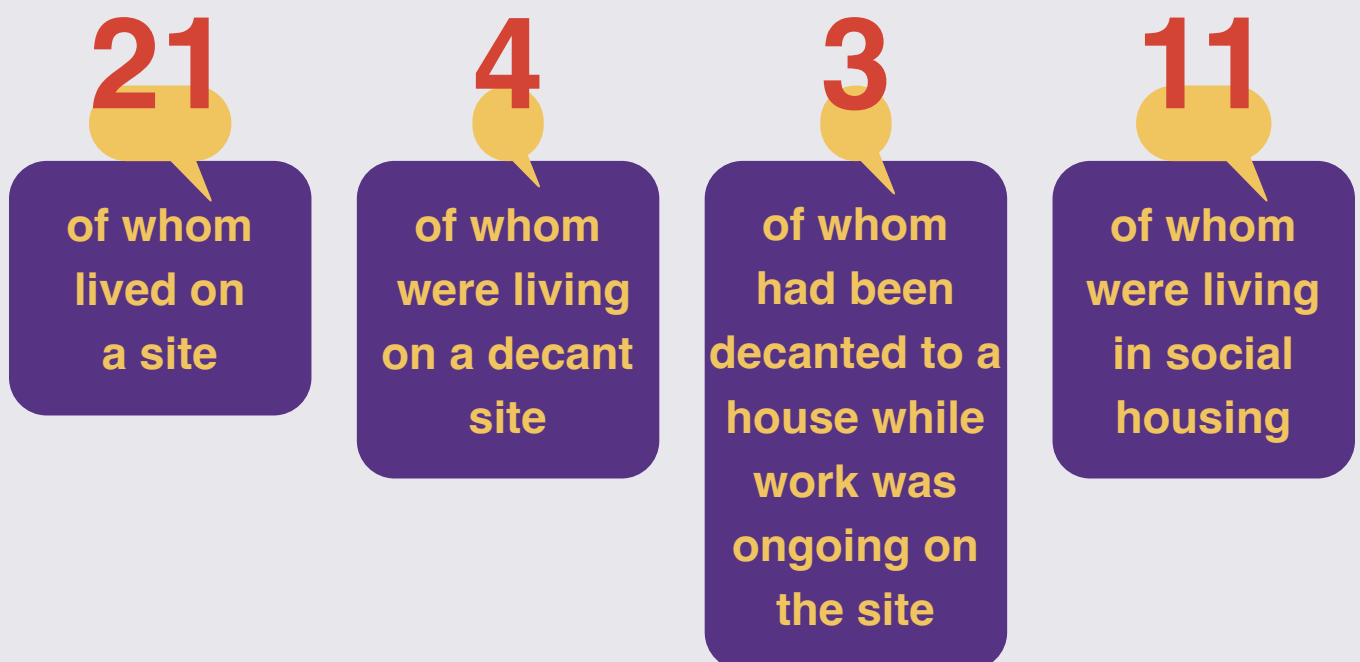
## Desk Based Research

We carried out a literature review of the inquiries and reports published in Scotland since 2001, to identify the key recommendations made about the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community in Scotland.

## Beneficiary Analysis

During February-June 2024 MECOPP organised 7 events with women from the Gypsy/Traveller community across Scotland. Staff from SWBG and MECOPP met with women from the Gypsy/Traveller Community in 6 different areas: Argyll & Bute, Forth Valley, Edinburgh, Fife, North Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire.

## We spoke with 39 women:



## Public expenditure analysis

We submitted FOIs to the relevant local authorities and one to the Scottish Housing Regulator. These aimed to understand the way in which budget decisions have impacted on delivering the recommendations about accommodation made in the various reports and inquiries published since 2001.

### The FOIs to local authorities asked:



Is the management of the councils Gypsy/Traveller site(s) funded out of the Housing Revenue Account? If it's not funded from the housing revenue account, how is this funded?



Can you provide me with: the rent charge, utility charge, council tax, and other any charges levied against those accommodated on its Gypsy/Traveller site(s) for the last **5** years?



For the last **5** years the level of rent charged on a **1** bed property.



The amount spent on planned maintenance on: general housing stock and on Gypsy/Traveller site(s) and how much of this investment was provided by the Scottish Government for the last five years?



Budgetary allocations for addressing issues related to climate change/net zero for example improving energy efficiency over the next **3** years on: general housing stock and Gypsy/Traveller site(s)



What has been allocated for the development/extension/maintenance of its Gypsy/ Traveller site from its capital, housing revenue or general fund for the next **4** years.



## The FOI to the Scottish Housing Regulator asked for the following:



Please can you provide an update on how you have monitored and evaluated the implementation of the recommendations from your 2015 Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland thematic inquiry?



The rationale behind the 2 indicators chosen to monitor landlords performance in relation to Gypsy/Travellers sites?



How you authenticate the satisfaction levels reported by landlords as part of Annual Return on the Charter?



How are you monitoring landlords moving to an asset management approach being taken to Gypsy/Traveller sites and the associated budget requirements related to this?



# Background

# Background

## 2001

The Equal Opportunities Committee Inquiry represented a milestone and a crucial step in Scottish politics in relation to Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers: the need for a coordinated approach to address the challenges faced by Scotland's oldest indigenous minority marked a political commitment to advance and build on support for Gypsy/Travellers.<sup>2</sup> The Inquiry found that at that time there were over **30** local authority sites managed with many of them in need of improvements. It also found that Gypsy/Travellers identified the need for new site provision both permanent (long-stay sites) and transit (short-stay sites). Funding for new sites and refurbishment was now an issue as grants were no longer available in Scotland for new sites or site improvements. Opposition from the settled community and difficulties in obtaining planning permission for Gypsy/Traveller sites was seen as a barrier to future site development.<sup>3</sup>

### Its recommendations included:



New provision or site improvement programmes should be developed in consultation with Gypsy/Travellers and representative organisations;



Communities Scotland has responsibility for the regulation of local authority services for Gypsy/Travellers. It should ensure local authorities carry out local needs assessment for Gypsy/Traveller accommodation, provide development funding for new and improved sites and issue guidance on improving site management standards

## 2004

In 2004 the Scottish Executive published a response to the 2001 enquiry entitled '*Delivering for Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers*'.

## 2005

In 2005 the Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC) reviewed the recommendations and found that the majority had not been implemented and very little had changed. This resulted in the establishment of the Short Life Strategic Group on Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland in June 2005.

## 2008

In 2008 Scottish Gypsy/Travellers were recognised in law as an ethnic minority group as a result of the findings of an employment tribunal.

The Scottish Government published its Race Equality Statement which recognised that Gypsy/Travellers are a '*particularly discriminated against and marginalised group*' and made four specific recommendations relating to the Gypsy/Traveller community around the development of:

- transit sites;
- an education strategy;
- engagement work with young Gypsy Travellers;
- community development work with the wider community.



## 2011

The Scottish Census in 2011 collected data on the Gypsy/Traveller community for the first time.

### This found that:



Just over **4,000** people in Scotland identified in the census that their ethnic group was **'White: Gypsy/Traveller'** and this represented 0.1 per cent of the population. It should be noted that this is believed to be an underestimation due to people not disclosing their ethnic status or not completing the census;



There were people from the Gypsy/Traveller community resident in all local authority areas;



Gypsy/Travellers were more likely to be younger than the population as a whole;



Only **83 per cent** of Gypsy/Travellers could speak, read and write English compared to **94 per cent** of the whole population;



Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland, compared to the population as a whole, were more likely to live in lone parent households and have **3** or more dependent children;



Gypsy/Travellers were more likely than the general population to have a limiting long-term health problem or disability (**28 per cent** compared to **20 per cent**) despite the fact they had a much younger age profile. Within this, they were also more likely to be limited **'a lot'** by a long-term health problem or disability (**16 per cent** compared to **10 per cent**);



Only **69 per cent** of Gypsy/Travellers reported **'good'** or **'very good'** health compared to **82 per cent** of the general population. Gypsy/Travellers were three times more likely to report 'bad' or 'very bad' health compared to the general population (**15 per cent** and **6 per cent** respectively). They were around five times more likely to report very bad health;



Gypsy/Travellers were more than twice as likely to provide a high level of unpaid care (**50** or more hours per week) than the general population;



Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland, compared to the population as a whole, were less likely to be full-time students (16-24 year olds) and more likely to have no qualifications;



Gypsy/Travellers were less likely than the population as a whole to own their home, more likely to live in a caravan, in overcrowded accommodation and not have central heating.<sup>4</sup>

On the tenth anniversary of the EOC's initial report, the Committee agreed to carry out two inquiries to review progress against the recommendations made in 2001. These looked at:



Gypsy/Traveller and care (this report was published in 2012);



Gypsy/Travellers and accommodation issues. This report was published in 2013 and found that at this time the number of local authority sites had reduced to **28** (**3** of which are seasonal).



Both reports found *'repeated failures: recommendations that have not been implemented and initiatives too small scale or short term.'*

## 2014

Updated Scottish Planning Policy statement was published which requires councils to plan for the current and future needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community, and to involve the community in planning and decision-making which affects them.

## 2015

In 2015 the Scottish Housing Regulator published its thematic review which found that social landlords did not always apply relevant charter standards to their Gypsy/Traveller services and sites. They also found that a number of social landlords have adopted a reactive approach to investing in their Gypsy/Traveller sites. Little evidence was found that landlords had adopted an asset management approach to their sites.

In 2015 the Scottish Government published minimum standards for Gypsy/Traveller sites – the need for this was recommended by the EOC in 2001.

Planning Action Scotland published 5 planning guides aimed at the Gypsy/Traveller community, elected members and planning officials.

## 2017

In 2017 the Scottish Government published Addressing Race Equality in Scotland: The Way Forward which stated that on every indicator of what is required to live a happy, productive and fulfilled life, Gypsy/Travellers are worse off than any other community in Scotland. It found that 'despite parliamentary enquires and reviews of progress, various reports, strategies and initiatives, little has changed for Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland.'

A ministerial working group on Gypsy/Travellers was set up in 2017 and guidance on managing unauthorised encampments was published.

## 2018

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) published an update on its thematic review which showed that over half of social landlords did not meet the minimum standards set by the Scottish Government by the deadline of June 2018. While the SHR National Panel 5 report found that there was a perception that sites had suffered from insufficient maintenance and capital investment. Most participants raised issues with their amenity block and several suggested that a shortage of Gypsy/Traveller site provision was having an impact on the quality of life for family and friends. The report showed that in 2016/17 there were **28** sites with **422** pitches.

The Scottish Government published Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Existing Premises with Sleeping Accommodation which recommended that there should be a 6m distance between units, this resulted in sites across Scotland reducing the number of pitches available on Gypsy/Traveller sites.

## 2019

The Scottish Government and COSLA jointly published Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers a joint action plan which came with some short-term funding from the Scottish Government for specific work, including £2million allocated to local authorities to improve sites.

## 2021

The Scottish Government published Interim Gypsy/Traveller site design guidance.

The Scottish Government allocated £20million to the Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund.

This aimed to provide more and better accommodation for Gypsy/Traveller communities.



## 2023

The Scottish Housing Regulator published an ARC report in 2023 which showed that based on the 2 indicators landlords with Gypsy/Traveller sites were asked to report on that:



Tenant satisfaction levels showed a 76% satisfaction level by those who responded (no information was provided on the number of responses received);



Weekly rent levels for a pitch (this provides no comparison to rent levels for properties or any information on what tenants receive for this rent level).

## 2024

An updated joint action plan 'Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers 2' was published in September 2024 which will run until 2026. This found *'evidence that good progress has been made since 2019 in the areas of accommodation, health, representation and tackling discrimination'*. However, it is clear that this progress requires further time to become more embedded and reach communities more widely.

In relation to accommodation, it states 'While the Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund has delivered additional pitches on some sites and larger pitches, due to pitch closures to meet fire safety distancing the overall amount of accommodation has not increased. Over the long term, there has been a reduction in site numbers.'<sup>5</sup>

The Scottish Housing Regulator published a report on Tenant & Gypsy/Traveller Participation in Scottish Social Housing: a thematic review which found that approaches to participation with the Gypsy/Traveller community was patchy and that improved cultural awareness and equalities training to staff was needed.



**What we found**

# What we found

As part of this project, we held seven focus groups, and spoke with a total of 39 women from the Gypsy/Traveller community, aged between 16 to over 60's.

**28%** of the women we spoke to live in permanent homes, **8%** had been decanted to temporary accommodation and **64%** lived on local authority Gypsy/Traveller sites.

The analysis of data coming from the focus groups helped to identify key themes that required further exploration. Freedom of Information requests were then submitted to gather further information and identify why the issues raised by the women may be occurring.



***The Gypsy/Traveller community continue to face a number of long-standing human rights issues***



The following highlights the issues identified; these demonstrate that the Gypsy/Traveller community continue to face a number of long-standing human rights issues. These include inadequate and poor standards of accommodation, direct experiences of discrimination, failure to safeguard children's rights to play and to an education and lack of adequate participation.

## Condition of Sites

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights includes the right to adequate housing. The legal obligations placed on states in relation to this is one of progressive realisation of rights meaning that there is an obligation on the state to constantly increase the standard of housing.



*It's been 30 years, and nothing worthwhile has been done....  
they waste more money on things that's useless to us.*



Given that most local authority sites in Scotland were originally developed in the 1980s, the overwhelming feeling of the women participating in this research was that there had been limited maintenance and development of sites since they had originally been set up and that the standards have progressively worsened over the years.





***“The sites been here for over 30 years and they’ve done very little to it we won’t drink the water as it’s not right. Amenity blocks have issues with damp and mould, are very small with no family living/dining space and cost a fortune to heat.”***

According to Planning Action Scotland cleanliness is considered to be very important in Gypsy/Traveller culture, and this manifests itself in their accommodation. The women we spoke to told us about the time they spend cleaning their chalets/amenity units and trailers trying to keep them to a good standard. The lack of maintenance on sites has led to many of the women having issues with damp, mould and sewage coming up through floors. The women spoke about how the poor condition of many of the amenity units mean they have to spend a lot of time trying to keep them clean.

In Argyll & Bute, North Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire women talked about how they were having trouble getting improvements made to their pitches as they were being told that the sites were going to be redeveloped and their landlords did not want to invest too much in making repairs which will be wasted. However, these areas have not been awarded any of the £20million Government funding and information from the FOI requests demonstrate they have not allocated funding for redevelopment from their capital budgets at this time.

One woman told us about how:

***“The OT wrote to my landlord about the mould in the chalets but nothing was done as they are waiting on this funding which might let them redevelop the site!”***

Another explained that:

*Due to one of her children's severe and long-term health needs she had informed ACHA of their need for a shower to replace the bath in the amenity block. This was also refused due to what all residents believe to be fictional changes that may be coming. The woman must lift and strategically place her daughter in and out of the bath herself and is causing her muscle pain and strain, and discomfort to her daughter.*

While others said;

*“ Because there is a possibility of getting money to upgrade the site from the Government the Council are reluctant to make any major changes at this point. ”*

*“ I'm past caring now, I've been looking through my broken kitchen drawer at my spoons for months, can't get a repair for that, how we supposed to get the site done and new homes for who needs them? ”*

*“ The doors on the blocks are bad. Not fitted right or just need new ones. The water they let in, I'm mopping up constantly, can't keep my floor dry. It's been reported years back but still waiting. ”*

The FOI requests asked Councils how much they had invested in their Gypsy/Traveller site(s) in the last five years and how much of this had been provided by the Scottish Government. The responses received highlighted:

Council Area	Investment over last 5 years
Argyll & Bute	<b>£108k</b> has been received from the Scottish Government and invested in the <b>2</b> sites
Clackmannanshire	<b>£814,689.03</b> has been spent on the site in the last 5 years; <b>£600,000.00</b> provided by Scottish Government
Edinburgh	The site has been redeveloped. <b>£90,600</b> provided by Scottish Government
Fife	Over <b>5</b> years <b>£2,789,310.21</b> has been spent on the <b>3</b> sites in Fife of this <b>£1,013,560.40</b> has been provided by Scottish Government.
*Falkirk	Over <b>5</b> years (2019/24) <b>£3073</b> has been spent on planned maintenance on the Gypsy/Traveller site and no money provided by Scottish Government. Compared to <b>£14,025,112</b> on General Housing Stock
North Ayrshire	Work undertaken in 20/21 and 21/22 with all funding provided by Scottish Government <b>£75,000</b> (site is not subject to the HRA lifecycle investment programme)
*West Dunbartonshire	Do not separate the costs of planned/reactive repairs to the Gypsy/Traveller site from general housing repairs (did not show any funding received from Scottish Government in this period)

\*The information provided by this Council as part of the FOI process, does not tie in with the information available from the Scottish Government, about funds allocated.

Information from COSLA shows that the £2million funding given in 20/21 to local authorities to improve sites was distributed as follows<sup>6</sup>:

Council Area	Scottish Government Funding Allocated
Argyll & Bute	£108,726.00 allocated 20/21
Clackmannanshire	£70,459 allocated 20/21
Edinburgh	£90,600 allocated 20/21
Fife	£231,651 allocated 20/21
*Falkirk	£70,495 allocated 20/21
North Ayrshire	£74,528 allocated 20/21
*West Dunbartonshire	£90,660 allocated 20/21

The FOI requests asked for information on the amount invested in the Councils' general housing stock. This information was not provided by most of those who responded.





In 2015 the Scottish Housing Regulator recommended that landlords take an asset management approach to their Gypsy/Traveller sites. This would ensure that a strategic approach is taken to how sites are managed, maintained and invested in. From information provided it does not appear that this is being followed by a number of the landlords we contacted.

It also raises questions about how effectively the current accountability systems pick up on how well landlords are meeting the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community. In the response from the Scottish Housing Regulator they told us that they are *“unaware of this change (a move to an asset management approach to sites) and what it means on the ground. We do though expect all social landlords and site providers to have an asset management plan for all of their stock (homes) to ensure they are warm, safe, affordable, etc and that lifespan is maximised.”*



The 2018 report by the Scottish Housing Regulator suggests that only one site in Scotland did not meet the minimum site standards. Given the input from the women who took part in this research, this raises questions about the quality of these standards or how effective the self-assessment by landlords of these standards is.

## Recommendation 1.

The Scottish Government should urgently undertake a review of the minimum site standards and how these are assessed. A framework for involving those on sites in assessing the standards should be developed.

### ■ Nature and Use of Sites

The nature and use of the sites has changed over the years which has impacted on the ability of families to travel and to access sites. According to Planning Action Scotland ***‘Family is highly important in Gypsy/Traveller culture, and it is common for extended families to live, work and travel together. If they are to be of practical use then sites need to be able to accommodate these larger groups and their caravans, trailers and vehicles.’***<sup>7</sup>

Changes to legislation have impacted on the Gypsy/Traveller way of life, and the impact this has had on the way sites are used was commented on by one woman who told us:

***“Where can anyone pull on? They can’t, there’s nowhere to pull on to. It used to be a family could pull on, stay for a few days or weeks, then shift off again. That’s the way it was supposed to be but they shut all the camps, the stopping places, so it made the sites more permanent to stay on and there’s not enough of them for us all.”***

In the majority of areas women spoke about how the sites and pitches available were not big enough for growing and extended families and how this impacted on their families and their ability to come together at significant times. They also spoke about being worried about what the future would hold:

***“ All our old people thought they’d be on the sites in their old age with their kids and grandkids around them, it’s how we live. You get the support from each other, helping with caring, looking after the kids, cleaning up. It’s not cultural if you can’t have growing families living together, pitches together on sites, room for other family coming to visit for a while. It affects your mental health. ”***

***“ There’s a long waiting list on the site. How does my other daughter or granddaughter when she’s older get a pitch beside me. I’m old and don’t keep well, I need them here and they want to be beside me. Some of the trees and bushes could be cleared back to make pitches bigger. There’s no room for bigger families. The boys and girls need to be kept separate at a certain age and that needs another trailer or two. ”***

While the Housing Development Needs Assessments (HDNA) for the areas we looked at stated that there was not any need for additional sites, women told us that they knew people who would rather be on a site. However, because of the condition of the sites or because they had been told they would never get on the site, they have not applied to get on one or gone on the waiting list.

“

*I've been told I'll be dead before I get on the site so didn't apply and have ended up in a house but don't want to be there*

”



While in Argyll & Bute we heard from families who had lifetime bans from sites imposed on them. These families were clear if they were able to, they would return to the site.

With less sites and pitches in 2024 than in 2001, women involved in this research do not feel that recommendations made since 2001 about the need for new sites and for Local Authorities to assess and meet the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community have been achieved.

A Scottish Government report in 2019 shows that there had been a reduction in public site provision of **62** pitches over the last ten years (a fall of **-14%** since 2008),<sup>8</sup> and since this time the shared East/Mid Lothian site has closed.

The FOI returns on investment and the review of Local Housing Strategies, Strategic Housing Investment Plans and Housing Development and Needs Assessments (as set out in Annex A) show that in the areas reviewed there is a mismatch between what the women participating told us about housing need and what is set out in these strategic documents.

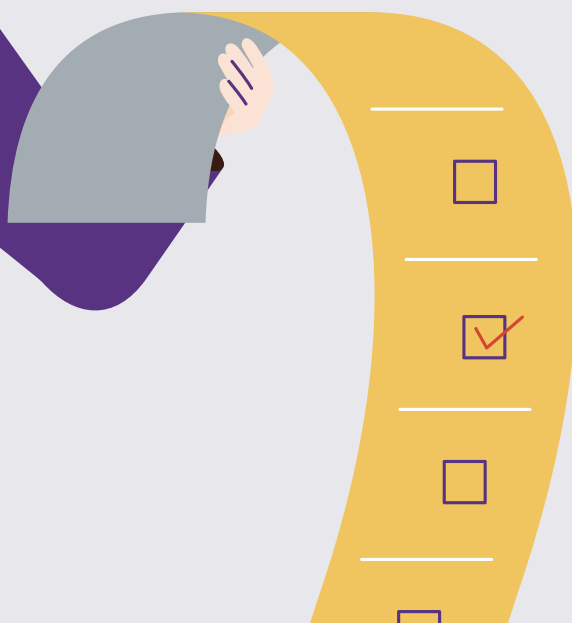
## Recommendation 2:

**Develop an action plan for improved data gathering on the Gypsy/Traveller community and how needs are assessed at Local Authority level.**

In a human rights context adequate housing needs to take into account the expression of cultural identity. The reduction in provision of culturally appropriate housing for the Gypsy/Traveller community and the failure to identify the level of need suggests that there are ongoing human rights breaches in relation to this.

Additionally, several women talked about how site allocation and sites being used on a permanent basis meant that if there were issues between families it could become very difficult to remain on a site. This raises issues about how new families being accepted onto sites could impact the community.

***“ They (LA) won’t listen when we say don’t let them on the site. They just say it’s procedure, there’s a list and who gets on next is who’s on the list. That might work in houses but sites is different, our culture is different, we know who’s who and what’s going to happen. How many sites has been ruined, sitting empty now, closed up. There’s less every year. ”***





“

*There's not enough sites for us, good sites. They've (LA) said there was gonna be a transient side to the site saying that was the original intentions of the site in the 1980's but later on that was out the window – thank God. There's too much trouble from people just coming and going as they please. We didn't want that. They kept three empty pitches up to the decant phase saying the spare ones would be used to extend pitch sizes, giving more room for larger family's needs to be met, then changed that to they'll be allocating three pitches to new tenants/families. We don't know how they're gonna allocate them or to who. My oldest daughter still at home is my carer, I don't know what I'll do if she gets married and there's no pitch for her. She'll likely marry soon, she'll want kids eventually, just not now. If she's not given a pitch when we move back, and she gets married, that's her having to leave. What will I do, I need her help? And I can't have a new married couple living on my pitch, it's not appropriate. They need privacy, their own family space. I need peace too but need her nearby as well. What will I do? Why can't they build another site for more of us so families can be near each other in the same area?'*

”

## Recommendation 3.

Landlords should review their allocation policies in consultation with the Gypsy/Traveler community to ensure these are reflective of the needs of the community.

### ■ Location of Sites

Most sites are situated on the outskirts of towns/villages, surrounded by trees and pylons, often on old cowps (tip/dumps) and access roads are often private falling outwith councils' statutory responsibilities. This can lead to potential issues for residents' health.

One woman shared her concerns about the health impacts of sites:

***If we're not made to live on an old cowp (a tip), by a canal, near scrap yards and pylons... it's all environmental unhealthy sites we've just had to accept. We just have to accept anything cause there's no choice and not enough of them (sites).***

Women in Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire spoke about the difficulties they experienced getting on and off the site and how this has been ongoing for years with no one willing to take responsibility for providing safe access.

***Road down from site leads onto A83 and there is no line of sight onto the road. No one will take responsibility for repairing the road despite the fact it is almost unpassable due to potholes.***

“

***No one will take responsibility for fixing the road onto the site.***

”

The lack of safe access to sites means that mums are having to take children to and from school as there is no safe way for children to get there otherwise.

“

***There are no pavements or alternative safe paths from the site to the main road and bus stop, children are unable to walk to school, so mums must take them.***

”

Mums also told us that the condition and location of sites impacts on their children's ability to play and that even when landlords have installed play equipment, this has often been done with little to no consultation, which means that are rarely used.

Article 27 of the UNCRC states that children have the right to an adequate standard of living which meet their physical and social needs, the poor accessibility to sites potentially breaches this right.



## Recommendation 4

**Landlords should review the ability of residents to access sites and ensure that access roads are maintained to an appropriate standard.**

### ■ Costs of Living on Sites

As part of the FOI request, we asked **7** Councils to provide us with rent information for the last five years for a pitch at their Gypsy/Traveller site as well as the rent for a one bed property.

Of the local authorities, **6** had sites in their area which they managed, **1** had **2** sites managed by a Housing Association.

Of the **6** areas who managed sites, **5** were funded via the Housing Revenue Account these were Clackmannanshire, Edinburgh, Fife, West Dunbartonshire, Falkirk Council (moved the funding to the Housing Revenue Account in September 2023). North Ayrshire Council's site is funded via the General Fund.

Rents for pitches varied from **£68.25** to **£105.85 per** week, **4** local authority areas charged more for pitch rental than rent on a one bed property. It is suggested that this is due to councils using a full cost recovery process and recovering the cost of wages for site management directly from residents. Council Tax was paid at Council Tax Band A, no other charges for accommodation was paid by residents.

## Recommendation 5

For sites funded from the housing revenue account a review of the equality implications of their approach to setting rents for sites should be conducted, including undertaking equality impact assessments (EQIAs) when rents are changed. The review should consider how the approach addresses their duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### Rents for Traveller sites compared to one bed property

Local Authority	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	GT Site £	1 Bed £	GT Site £	1 Bed £	GT Site £	1 Bed £	GT Site £	1 Bed £	GT Site £	1 Bed £
Clackmannanshire	91.80	78.62	91.80	78.62	91.80	81.06	91.80	83.49	91.80	89.08*
Edinburgh	80.38	78.62	82.00	79.60	83.64	79.08	83.64	79.58	105.51	**
Falkirk		51.62		53.71		54.78		55.58	96.64*	**
Fife	63.30	67.14	64.96	68.64	66.24	70.58	67.22	71.57	68.25	73.32
North Ayrshire	91.05	72.98	92.78	74.37	95.10	76.23	99.86	81.12	105.85	85.99
West Dunbartonshire	73.00	75.56	74.39	78.05	75.50	79.47	77.01	81.07	80.86	84.92



### KEY

- \* Falkirk council only provided figures for one year for the Gypsy Traveller site
- \*\* The Scottish Housing Regulator did not have figures for 23/24 and the council did not provide this data
- At present all residents have been decanted from the Clackmannanshire site while it is upgraded

As well as rent costs women spoke about the cost of heating more than one trailer and amenity blocks being a huge financial burden, along with the rising costs of essentials including gas cannisters and food. The Scottish Government's strategic approach to fuel poverty recognises that the Gypsy/Traveller community are at increased risk of experiencing fuel poverty<sup>9</sup> due to:



Sites having no access to mains gas and having to rely on bottle gas, which local suppliers can be reluctant to provide to sites;



Local authorities holding electricity contracts and selling this onto residents;



Residents having pre-payment meters either directly to the supplier or the local authority;



Poor insulation in amenity chalets and trailers.

As part of this strategy, research was due to be undertaken in 2022 with the Gypsy/Traveller community to understand how their needs can be addressed through Area Based Schemes and Warm Homes Scotland. As of November 2024 this research has not been published.



*We used to dread getting a shower, especially in the winter, heaters hardly ever work... when they did it could cost between £20-£30 to heat the block... and us all to get a shower.*





*We pay rent for chalets (almost same as for 4 bed house), plus pay for utilities direct to the council as well as heating our trailers/vans.*

Women are often the ‘shock absorbers of poverty’<sup>10</sup> for the women we spoke to this is exacerbated by their living conditions. As a result the rising cost-of-living has impacted on women’s mental wellbeing with women often having to manage tight budgets and having to decide whether to heat or eat. The limited cooking facilities that many had access to in their amenity blocks impacted on the options women have for feeding themselves and their families.



***Women are often the ‘shock absorbers of poverty’<sup>10</sup>***

One woman told us:

*You've no idea how bad it's been. I couldn't even stay in my own home, couldn't keep it warm. I took my bedding into my mam's... me, my mam, my sister, and my niece all slept huddled up together in the one room under all our quilts. We've never been so freezing and not afford the heating like this winter.*

Another older woman told us:

***I've been having long term issues with a broken boiler in my trailer, and I can't get help from the council because I own my trailer, and I can't afford to get it fixed.***

## Recommendation 6:

The Scottish Government should publish the research it committed to undertaking on addressing Fuel Poverty.

## Recommendation 7.

Landlords should carry out an assessment of what action can be taken and the investment required to address fuel poverty on sites.

### ■ Redevelopment of sites

Women told us about the way in which their landlords had spent the **£2million** the Scottish Government had allocated in 2020-21 and about how this had often been spent without consultation which meant that they felt this money had been wasted.

“

*They put in drying green post Covid but were told it wouldn't be used because of where it was situated and that something was needed for kids, but they ignored us.*

”

“

*They upgraded the kids playpark without speaking to us about it, its hardly been used as we don't have kids who can use it.*

”

The women participating in this research whose sites are being redeveloped often felt like they were not listened to and that their experience and understanding of their way of living and what they need was often ignored. This is despite the fact that access to the Scottish Government funding should be contingent on plans being drawn up in conjunction with the community.

“

*You get spoken to like you're illiterate, like you don't know your own way of life and what's needed*

”



In Fife and Clackmannanshire/Forth Valley we spoke with women who had been decanted to allow for the redevelopment of their sites. In both areas the women we spoke with were unhappy with how the redevelopment was being handled.

In Fife women had been on the decant site for almost **11** months and nothing had happened on the old site, while in Clackmannanshire they had been off the site and in temporary accommodation for about **18** months at the point we met with them. At both sites women told us that they had felt rushed to move off the site with little notice given and then no work started for a significant period of time after they moved.

“

*They had us moving off, not much notice, packing up all our belongings, some sentimental and precious family items frightened of getting broke. It was very hard and emotional after being here for over 30 years, seeing my kids born and grew up here, then some of my grandkids as well. We left in October of 2022, not long before Christmas time. We could've still been there for all they done was eventually clear the whole site, got rid of all the blocks, site warden's office and the playground that none of the kids used cause they put it in a silly place, right at the roadside where cars and vans are coming in and out the site. Anyway, we'd have still had our home comforts for another winter, seen the kids playing on their new toys around the camp, seeing your family, friends and old neighbours coming and going, saying hiya, and enjoying company when you needed it. I don't understand their big hurry, and then what? We're still here [temporary accommodation], its 2024!*

”

Some families in Fife had moved to a small area off the main site, while others had moved into temporary accommodation. Women shared their feelings of isolation and anxiety due to the length of time in a house for the first time with a lack of information about why the redevelopment project is taking so long to properly begin.

One woman from the Alloa site told us that when she was being moved into temporary accommodation, she was originally offered an unfurnished property and expected to furnish it herself. No one had considered that the white goods, beds etc she had could not be removed from her trailer.

Another family were placed in temporary accommodation that was a distance from their children's school and there was an expectation that the children would change schools without any consideration being made of the work that had been done between the family and school to keep the boys in education.

Women on both sites said they felt there had been a lack of communication from the council about what was happening and what the site would look like after redevelopment, including whether it would meet their needs.

***“It’s not going to be comfortable living joined up, every room backs onto the ones next door. We’ll be head-to-head in bed, back-to-back in the bathroom, hearing every noise, it’ll be really awkward, embarrassing... a lot of people will feel shame.”***

The women we spoke with were clear that the consultations carried out with them often felt tokenistic and that they did not fully involve the community or use the community's knowledge and experience to develop the sites ensuring they meet the community's needs.

## **Recommendation 8**

**As part of the Scottish Government's Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund, the projects funded are to be independently evaluated to provide guidance to other councils on how to undertake site development. How to carry out consultation and involvement processes which support the community should be a key component of this.**

There are fears within the community that the same poor maintenance which has affected sites will continue post redevelopment. This would again lead to poor standards of accommodation. If this were the case current investment being made will not be maximised.

## Recommendation 9

The Scottish Housing Regulator should develop an indicator which allows them to monitor ongoing investment into sites and whether an asset management approach is being taken.

### ■ Future Proofing Sites

Through this research women shared the concerns they have for their safety on sites because of changing weather conditions due to climate change. Most sites are surrounded by large trees and with more regular high winds there are serious concerns about how this will affect them.

In Fife the wind had brought a tree down causing a near miss as result of the trailer being moved through the night, while another sustained a broken window. Residents stated they had warned the Council they were frightened this would happen several times and had asked for the trees nearest and with lower hanging branches to be dealt with pre-decantation.

In North Ayrshire women told us:

***“It’s a health and safety issue too, the big tall trees. We’re all frightened they fall down with the bad winds and fall on the trailers and kill somebody. It’s happened before elsewhere within our community, trees falling and killing people.”***

The FOI request asked Councils what budgetary allocations they had made to address climate change/Net zero issues over the next three years, and what they had allocated for the development/extension/maintenance of sites. The information we received was as follows:



Council	Climate change/Net Zero	Development/extension/ Maintenance
Argyll & Bute	FOI did not provide any information about any investment plans, sites are owned and managed by Argyll Community Housing Association.	HDNA states 'there are sufficient indicators that suggest there is an urgent need to make significant improvements to the standard of accommodation and services provided on existing Gypsy/Traveller sites.'
Clackmannanshire	FOI states <b>£3,578,000</b> has been allocated plus <b>£2,500,000</b> grant from Scottish Government for the redevelopment of the site which is currently underway.'	
Edinburgh	FOI response states that due to recent redevelopment no further planned investment over next <b>3</b> years	
Fife	FOI response state a budget of <b>£8,424,177</b> is remaining of the money already allocated to the redevelopment of the site – residents in Cupar have been moved but work not yet started as yet no additional investment for energy efficiency work has been identified as being required	
Falkirk	FOI response states a budget of <b>£22m</b> has been allocated over next <b>3</b> years to target energy efficiency nothing has been specifically allocated towards the Gypsy/Traveller site for this work or in relation to the development/extension or planned maintenance.	
North Ayrshire	FOI response states no allocations have been made from any budgets for the redevelopment of the site or to address climate change/net zero issues (conversations have been ongoing with residents and plans are being made for redevelopment of site but no budget/funding identified for this)	
West Dunbartonshire	FOI response states budget for planned investment not separated out to show specific investment to Gypsy/ Traveller site, they work with yearly budgets.	SHIP states 'The Council is currently engaged with the residents of our Gypsy/ Travellers site over much needed improvements. We are in discussion with the Scottish Government over accessing their Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund but if this fails, we will give consideration to the option of accessing the AHSP fund. Accordingly, the Dennystoun Forge site is included in the SHIP as a possible future project of <b>20</b> homes. WDC propose to develop <b>20</b> homes at the Gypsy/Traveller site through the SHIP if alternative Scottish Government funding is not available.'

Annexe A includes full information from FOI responses and information included in Local Housing Strategy, Strategic Housing Investment Plan and Housing Development Needs Assessment. The information collected suggests that little consideration has been given to the impact climate change will have on the needs of the community or on the sites.

## Recommendation 10

Landlords should undertake an evaluation of sites suitability and safety in relation to extreme weather.

### ■ Discrimination and stigma

All of the women participating in this research gave examples of the discrimination they experienced. They spoke about the attitudes of staff they came into contact with and how they were often dismissed.

Women told us:

“

*I asked for grit for the road, and they told me to buy it myself, despite them providing it for other housing areas.*

”

“

*The site is fully electric and there are regular power surges which trip the system, if it happens at night we can't get it fixed as we aren't allowed a key to give the engineer access*

”

“

*We can't get our mail delivered here, the postie refuses to deliver to us, people are missing out on hospital appointments because of this.*

”

“

*They think we're just ignorant, uneducated and don't know anything*

”

One woman living with her family in a council housing estate said

***“ our local binmen know our family are Travellers and won’t empty our wheelie-bins. We have to take our refuse away to dispose of it legally themselves. ”***

Another woman living on a site says

***“ we are between a rock and a hard place with the council when it comes to things like getting rid of an old trailer. Not allowed to scrap it onsite with a skip, not allowed into the local dump... they know we’re Travellers and the council won’t give us a letter saying we’re paying tenants to let us in, the scrappy wants a fortune to take it away, and we can’t just dump it. What do we do? There must be something they can help us with. I need rid... they want rid... it’s an eyesore, taking up space, I need a new one in to be able to use it for beds and my stuff. Mines is leaking, it’s falling apart... can’t sleep in it and not fit to store anything. The Housing Officer hates Travellers, doesn’t help us with anything. ”***

The right to live free from discrimination is a basic tenet of human rights legislation.

The experiences described by the women we spoke with shows that the Gypsy/Traveller community continues to experience discrimination and stigma.

## Recommendation 11

Public bodies should ensure all relevant staff undertake cultural awareness and equalities training.

## Recommendation 12

Public bodies should review their complaints procedures to ensure these are accessible to the Gypsy/Traveller community.

### ■ Bullying in schools



The young women and mothers participating in the research spoke about the bullying that their young people experienced at school and how this was often the cause of them no longer attending school.

Parents would like to see bullying, due to their ethnicity, culture, and traditions especially, dealt with properly by the schools. They would like to see more awareness raising of the contribution to communities that Gypsy/Travellers have provided for generations, for example talking about the war effort, and being the first to recycle and upcycle what people chucked out or scrapping of old vehicles.

## Recommendation 13

**Education Scotland should consider how inclusion of the experiences/history of the Gypsy/Traveller Community can be embedded into the Curriculum for Excellence.**

In Argyll and Bute two families told us they did not know that Oban High School had a dedicated Gypsy/Traveller worker after several years of bullying of their children. This bullying included derogatory and pejorative words used by schoolchildren from the ‘settled’ community including – dirty, pikey, mink, Tink, gyppo, thieves and phrases used like, **“you’re not wanted/welcome here”**, **“You don’t belong, get back to your vans”**. This behaviour and lack of support led to what is termed ‘*institutionally coerced exclusions*’ where through inaction a toxic educational environment was created which force children and their families to withdraw from formal educational environments.<sup>11</sup>



“

*it's like it's ok to racist to Gypsy/Travellers*

”

“

*I've had to fight for my kids to get a few hours a fortnight for home schooling after taking them out from being bullied. There's nothing there for them to learn about their own lives either, or that shows the settled people who we really are. They have other days where they show other cultures and celebrate, have the food and make things, do drawings and stuff. Why not us too? The month of June is Gypsy/Traveller history. Why not do something in the schools then?*

”

“

*My girl here was going to college, doing really well for not having had much school and fighting for a few hours extra for her. She'd passed her first course and was trying childcare, she's really good with the wee ones. Then the tutor started going on about her being a Traveller, saying you can't be one, you don't dress like the Big Fat Gypsy Wedding. They shamed her in front of the class. The lot of them staring and laughing. She's shy but she was coming out of herself and now she won't go back. What's she gonna do now? What's out there for her? It's not right.*

”

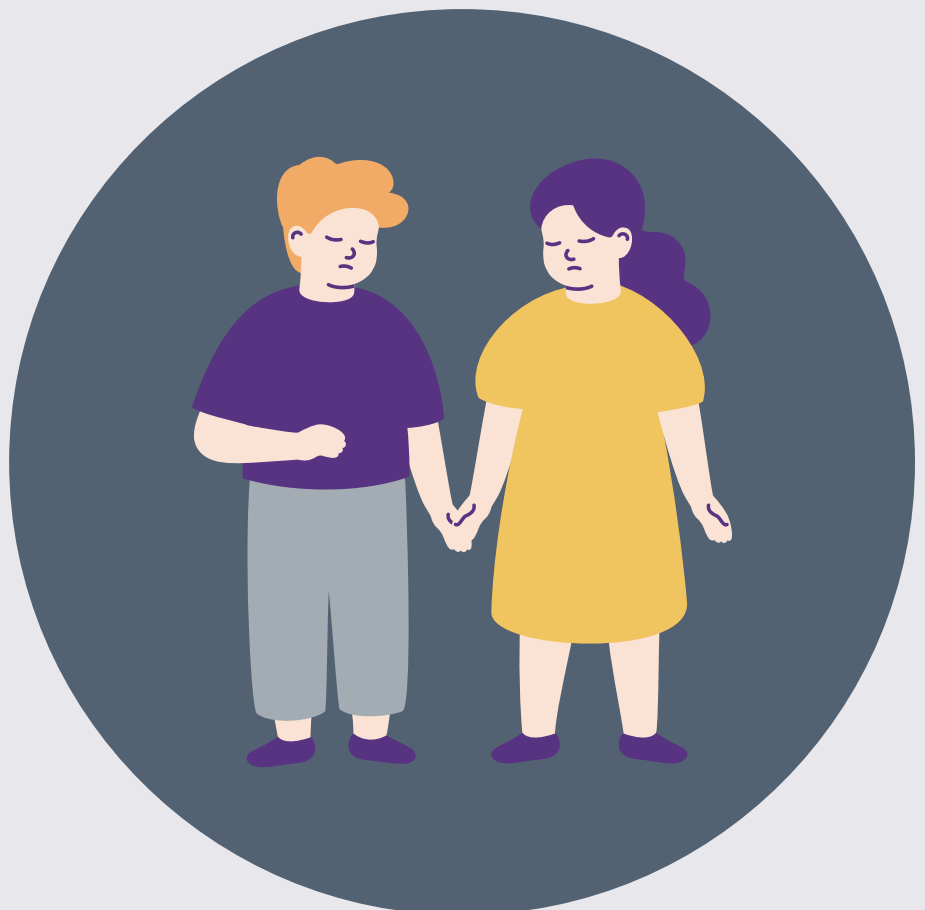


“

*Some of the kids on here go to school, primary school, not nursery or high school. The older ones get bullied, don't get to learn things important to them and our culture, and there's stuff we don't want them learning about in mixed classes especially. The older boys learn trades from their fathers or other men in the family and community.*

”

This suggests that while it was recognised in the EOC report in 2001 that there was a need for the development of anti-bullying strategies in schools that these have not been successful.



## Recommendation 14

All incidents of racism and racist bullying in schools should be recorded, monitored and reported centrally, providing an overview of the action taken to resolve the issues and support provided, as well as the outcome of this.

### ■ Privacy

At a number of sites women spoke about the lack of privacy they felt as a result of CCTV cameras and as a result of the behaviour of those who were involved in site management. Residents feel it's important to get the right balance between having cameras for their safety and a feeling of being spied on.

*“It's a breach of our privacy they're looking into our windows”*

*“it's your home you ken you're being watched, it's uncomfortable”*

*“I canny go on like this, it's unbearable... torture... we were told the cameras on our doors and windows was blanked out but they can still see us coming and going from our trailers to the pods and to our cars & vans like”*

*“they (the LA) say it's for all the equipment down there (decant site) but all that's there now is us, our own trailers and motors, and the pods. So what they're saying is they can't trust us with the kitchens and bathrooms we pay rent for!”*

## Recommendation 15

Landlords should work with the Gypsy/Traveller community to carry out a data protection impact assessment of all CCTV cameras, this should take into account residents right to privacy.

### ■ Impact on women and their families of living in permanent houses

The women engaged in this research who did not live on sites spoke about the loss they felt from not being able to live in culturally appropriate accommodation, and how this impacted on their mental health increasing feelings of isolation and not belonging. Those who were living in permanent housing had moved for a variety of reasons including:



Health issues and sites no longer being suitable;



Poor condition of sites, meaning they no longer felt safe or suitable;



Overcrowding on the site and lack of any other space to accommodate them;



Issue with other families on sites.

One woman told us about how her family had received a lifetime ban from any sites in their local area and how she was aching to be back on a site for her and her children. She said her children's ability to mix with their own people and have the childhood freedoms in safety was limited which was hugely distressing.



Another told us about how she had to move into a house after she took on kinship care for her sisters two children after her death.

“

*‘We were overcrowded and there were loads of issues on the site from one family so we decided to leave for a house. The house they gave us was terrible, so many problems it caused us a lot of bad health issues, but the council wouldn’t listen to us. My mental health’s been really bad. The house had asbestos that they eventually listened to me and did something about it. It took them forever, MECOPP had to speak to them cause they wouldn’t listen to me or believe me that it wasn’t just about my mental health, there was something really wrong with the house.’*

”

Another told us:

“

*‘It affects your health when you’ve not got neighbours from your own community to talk with about your problems. It makes you feel really isolated, they don’t know what you mean.’*

”

While another told us:

“

*Extra support's needed when we're put in houses... have to move off the site. It's a huge cultural change. You feel the isolation, feel really low and lonely. There's nothing for the kids. We can't let them just go and play in the street, don't know who's out there and what they'll get pulled into. We don't want them near drugs and things that's not appropriate. We can't trust they'll just be ok. There should be something for the kids to be amongst their own.*

”

Women were clear that just because they did not travel regularly and were in bricks and mortar accommodation that this did not affect how they saw themselves culturally and ethnically. It did however, impact on how they were able to express this and on their mental health particularly in relation to feelings of isolation.

The women who no longer live on sites talked about how they don't tell neighbours or other organisations that they are travellers for fear of the reaction/response they will get and how this impacts on them as they aren't able to be true to themselves.

“

*'At church when I'm with my own, my family and friends, I can be me and breathe easy. I have the loveliest neighbours of a lot of years but have to keep only my upstairs for me, it's all Traveller, all my nice wee bits and pieces. But anyone coming in my downstairs won't see anything to show I'm a Traveller. I love my bedroom, it's all me.'*

”

**“It’s a sad feeling when you can’t just be you,  
when you can’t be true to yourself.”**

The women also shared how they felt this lack of connection and isolation impacted on their children:

**“The kids are missing out on their Traveller upbringing,  
their culture. There’s no cultural youth groups, they’re  
missing their proper childhood.”**

Previous research and reports have primarily focussed on the needs of those living on Gypsy/Traveller sites with little consideration of the needs of those in bricks and mortar accommodation.

## Recommendation 16



This research shows the need to consider the distinct support needs of those in bricks and mortar accommodation particularly in relation to addressing the isolation and mental health impacts



# Conclusion



# Conclusion

Despite the focus on *Improving the Lives of the Gypsy/Traveller Community* since the advent of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, there continues to be multiple human rights breaches experienced.

It is clear from this research that despite many reports, inquiries and actions plans improvements are not being felt by the women we spoke to in the Gypsy/Traveller community in Scotland. A significant factor in this is that recommendations from these reports, inquiries/ action plans are not being followed through within the budgetary process.

The most recent version of '*Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers*' provides another example of how the actions set out are not linked to funding. Nor are there clear indicators set which will allow proper accountability mechanisms to ensure that actions taken lead to positive changes.

Without clearly linking the outcomes needed to improve the lives of Gypsy/Travellers to the budget process, and through this identifying investment needed, it's unlikely that the structural and systemic changes needed to address the inequalities experienced by the Gypsy/Traveller community will take place.



# Recommendations

# Recommendations

## ■ Recommendation 1

A review of the minimum site standards and how these are assessed should be progressed urgently and a framework for involving those on sites in assessing the standards should be developed.

## ■ Recommendation 2

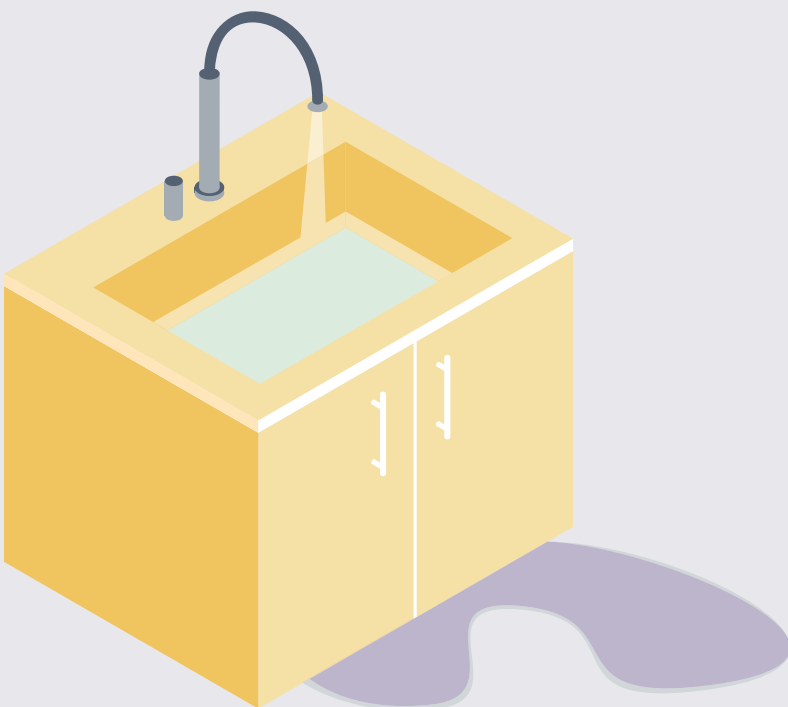
Develop an action plan for improved data gathering on the Gypsy/Traveller community and how needs are assessed at Local Authority level.

## ■ Recommendation 3

Landlords should review their allocation policies in consultation with the Gypsy/Traveller community to ensure these are reflective of the needs of the community.

## ■ Recommendation 4

Landlords should review the ability of residents to access sites and ensure these are maintained to an appropriate standard.



### ■ Recommendation 5

For sites funded from the housing revenue account a review of the equality implications of their approach to setting rents for sites should be conducted, including undertaking equality impact assessments (EQIAs) when rents are changed. The review should consider how the approach addresses their duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### ■ Recommendation 6

The Scottish Government should publish the research it committed to undertaking on addressing Fuel Poverty.

### ■ Recommendation 7

Landlords should carry out an assessment of what action can be taken and the investment required to address fuel poverty on sites.

### ■ Recommendation 8

As part of the Scottish Government's Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund, the projects funded are to be independently evaluated to provide guidance to other councils on how to undertake site development. How to carry out consultation and involvement processes which support the community should be a key component of this.

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### Recommendation 14

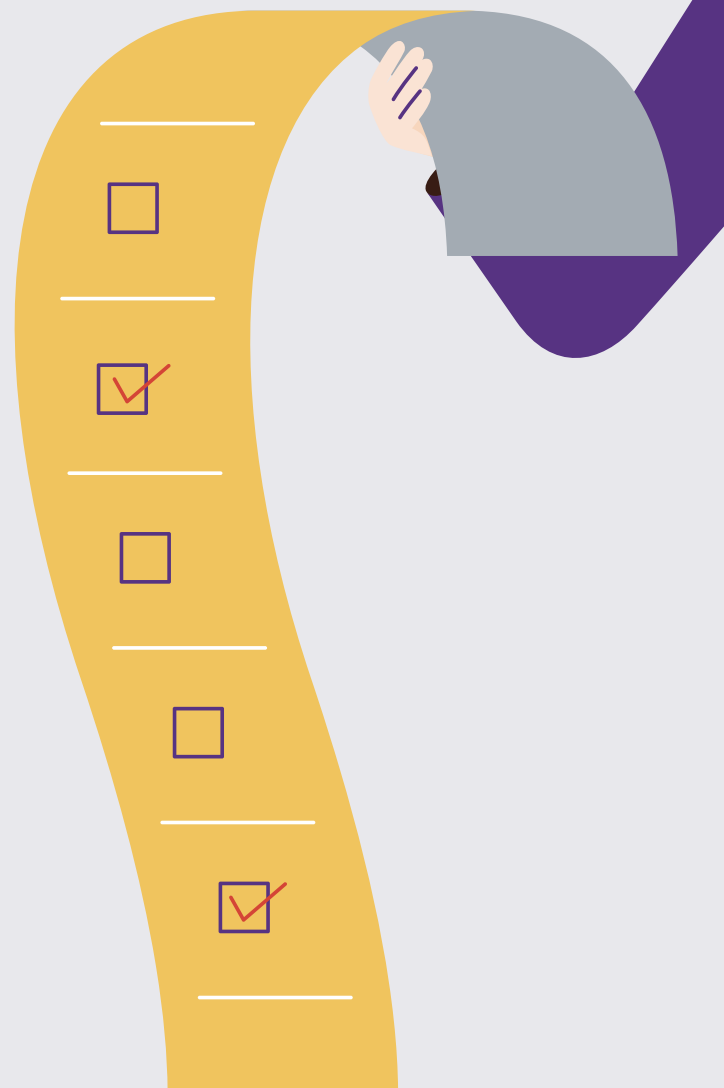
All incidents of racism and racist bullying in schools should be recorded, monitored and reported centrally, providing an overview of the action taken to resolve the issues and support provided, as well as the outcome of this.

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Landlords should work with the Gypsy/Traveller community to carry out a data protection impact assessment of all CCTV cameras, this should take into account residents right to privacy.

### Recommendation 16

This research shows the need to consider the distinct support needs of those in bricks and mortar accommodation particularly in relation to addressing the isolation and mental health impacts.





# Annexe A

# Annexe A Freedom of Information and publicly available investment details

## Argyll & Bute

FOI did not provide any information about investment plans, as before sites are owned and managed by Argyll Community Housing Association.

HDNA states ‘A number of participants in the focus group also noted that they felt that the RSL application process was a barrier for many members of the community being able to register their interest for a pitch. The reasons cited included lack of skills to apply online, being deterred by area staff, poor site standards and some instances of discrimination or anti-social behaviour. There was a consensus that the actual need and demand for site pitches would be higher than official figures suggested due to local knowledge and through word of mouth, fellow Gypsy/Travellers feel that it is not worthwhile applying if sites are full. Whilst the number of completed surveys underpinning this dedicated research study was relatively small, they provide both quantifiable and qualitative data on the views of the local Gypsy/Traveller community. Together with the supplementary information provided verbally at the Gypsy/Traveller focus group, MSP Round Table discussions and via other stakeholder engagement, there are sufficient indicators that suggest there is an urgent need to make significant improvements to the standard of accommodation and services provided on existing Gypsy/Traveller sites.’

Local Housing Strategy states ‘there are currently two official Gypsy/Travellers public sites within the authority area, a reduction due to closure of the Torlochan site near Dunoon in 2016/17. Capacity at both sites has also reduced due to the changes to site licences and fire regulations relating to the spacing between caravans/trailers. It is planned that proposed site improvements will address the reduction in pitches in some part, subject to full consultation with the community.



Private sites and Unauthorised Camping - There are currently no private Gypsy/Travellers sites in Argyll and Bute; and there have been no planning applications for the development of such provision over the last 5 years, which tends to support the HNDA research findings that there is currently no need or demand for a private site in the area.

There are periodically incidences of roadside stopping and unauthorised encampment reported across the area. These are often on land owned by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) and whilst not identified as a significant issue, local officers will try and engage with the households when incidences are reported and encourage them to move on to a regulated site and offer support where required. These are generally short stays by transient Gypsy/Travellers households and there is insufficient evidence to suggest any requirement for the provision of a transient site in Argyll and Bute.

ACHA have undertaken improvement works on both the registered sites to ensure they are compliant with the minimum site standards. Whilst the sites meet regulatory standards, it has acknowledged through engagement and HNDA consultation that further works are still required on both sites to modernise and improve the overall conditions and amenity space for residents.'

## Clackmannanshire

FOI response states '£3,578,000 has been allocated plus £2,500,000 grant from Scottish Government for the redevelopment of the site which is currently underway.'

Most up to date local housing strategy is not available on line, but strategic housing investment plan (SHIP) mentioned investment in site.

SHIP states 'There is one Gypsy / Traveller site in Clackmannanshire at Westhaugh. This has now reached the end of its useful life in terms of the quality of accommodation. A virtual engagement session was held with residents in October 2020 to discuss site improvements.



The Scottish Government are working on developing a design guide for Gypsy/Traveller sites that will be used for new sites or major refurbishments of existing sites, which the Council will need to meet. The Scottish Government have indicated that they are keen to create a number of demonstration projects that can establish examples of model sites, as a trial for the new design guide.

A budget allowance of **£120,000** per pitch is assumed, based on typical costs for new build affordable housing as a comparator. If the site can hold **14** pitches, taking into consideration new fire regulations and SG future design standards, this would mean a total budget of **£1.680m**. The service had **£240k** in the capital plan for financial year 2020/21 and the service proposes rolling this forward as part of the 2021/22 budget approval process, together with creating an earmarked HRA reserve of **£1.440m** for the remaining amount. This reserve would be drawn down following discussions and agreement with residents on spend and investment priorities to be delivered within the budget allocation.

It will be the residents who will drive the approach and decisions. Moreover, this means that even without securing funding from the Scottish Government the residents have an agreed funding pot to work with. Any future SG grant received could then minimise the HRA spend. Works are planned to commence sometime in 2022.'

## Edinburgh

FOI response states that due to recent redevelopment no further planned investment over next **3** years.

HDNA for South East Scotland (which covers Edinburgh) states 'Around **90** Gypsy/Travellers are waiting for a pitch on a public site in South East Scotland, although this is likely to be an underestimate of need. An average of **108** roadside encampments occurs each year in South East Scotland. There are an estimated **2,000** Travelling Showpeople in Scotland. While data is unavailable to indicate the proportion of those in South East Scotland, there are known to be **4** sites accommodating Travelling Showpeople.'

East and Midlothian's joint site, was the only site with no waiting list. Although waiting lists can provide evidence of demand for site provision, the quality of sites, relationship between the site and potential tenants will both influence whether people join a waiting list. The City of Edinburgh's experience is that Gypsy/Travellers generally only apply to sites where they have family members or relatives present. Therefore, the site at North Cairntow is mostly populated by tenants who are in some way related to each other. Unlike a waiting list for local authority housing, there is no consistent way for Gypsy/Travellers to indicate their need for a pitch. However, **20** Gypsy/Traveller households have expressed need to local authorities, **15** of these being for a pitch in the City of Edinburgh.'

SHIP states The Council currently owns and manages one site in Edinburgh, known as the North Cairntow Travellers Site in the south east of the city. The site was created in 1984 and consists of **20** pitches serviced by **10** semi-detached utility blocks. A community facility was installed in 2016.

The final design of the redevelopment of the site was agreed with residents and contractor for the re-development was appointed following the approval by Finance and Resources Committee on 4 March 2021. The redevelopment has received **£90,660** of Scottish Government funding as part of the joint action plan.

## Fife

FOI response state a budget of **£8,424,177** is remaining of the money already allocated to the redevelopment of the site – residents in Cupar have been moved but work not yet started as yet no additional investment for energy efficiency work has been identified as being required. Local Housing Strategy states Council sites in Fife currently meet the minimum condition standards required with improvement work recently carried out to amenity blocks at the Kirkcaldy site through kitchen and bathroom replacements as well as improving energy efficiency. Tenants have expressed an interest to have residential mobile homes and chalets installed on site and a **3-year** capital plan is in place to achieve this on two of the three Council sites in Fife, with potential for implementation on the remaining site. To assist with the capital

plan delivery, Fife Council received funding from the Scottish Government's Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund. The funding will support the provision of decant amenity units and assist with the installation of energy efficiency measures in chalets.

Unauthorised encampments are not a huge issue within Fife with twelve cases recorded in 2019-20 and a further five in 2020-21. There is no current identified need to increase site provision due to roadside encampments.

Fife are included in the South East Scotland HDNA.

SHIP states 'Fife Council is committed to raising standards across all **3** of its Gypsy Traveller sites. Funding is in place for the next **2 years** to create new pitches and establish chalet style accommodation at **2 sites** - Tarvit Mill and Heatherywood. We plan to work with the tenants at our other site Thorntonwood to understand what their needs and aspirations are.

The Council has allocated **£2.4 million** of HRA capital to undertake this work. An application has been made to the Scottish Government capital funding programme for Gypsy/Traveller accommodation to supplement the Council funding to provide communal meeting spaces, digital infrastructure and environmental improvements. It is hoped that work on Tarvit Mill and Heatherywood will be completed by spring 2023.'

## Falkirk

FOI response states a budget of **22m** has been allocated over next **3** years to target energy efficiency nothing has been specifically allocated towards the Gypsy Traveller site for this work or in relation to the development/extension or planned maintenance.

Local Housing Strategy states Falkirk Council has one purpose-built site with hard standing pitches. Each pitch has access to an amenity block with a kitchen, shower/ toilet and washing facilities. One of the blocks is adapted for wheelchair use.

There are currently five private sites providing a total of **24** Gypsy/Travellers established these private pitches themselves, purchased the land and went through the planning process. There are no commercial holiday or touring sites which accept Gypsy/Travellers locally.

There are low levels of encampments locally with figures dropping from 2017 where there were **18** to **7** in 2020. The number of homeless applications from Gypsy/ Travellers has remained low between 2015-2020/21 with **11** applications in 2020/21. Over the five 5 years to 2021, housing applications from Gypsy/ Travellers for mainstream housing peaked at **30** in 2021.

The HNDA therefore did not identify a need for an additional Gypsy/ Traveller site.

Following discussions with the Scottish fire and rescue service with reference to Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 which highlight that caravans must be 6 metres apart. We have had to reduce the site from **15** pitches to **10** to comply with this regulation. Currently **6** pitches are available to let from a possible ten on the site and there is no waiting list.

Gypsy/Travellers on the Council site advise that older residents with disabilities do not want to move from the site, as their support networks are in place. Following consultation (see below) with Gypsy/Travellers on site, plans were drawn up to reprofile.

Consultation was conducted in summer 2021 using the place standard tool by the Travelling Persons' Participation Group and Falkirk Council officers. As part of the Place Standard Consultation, Gypsy/ Travellers on site identified that there is a need for a transit pitch onsite. This would greatly assist when relatives and friends need to visit to provide care and support for a longer period. Currently although relatives and friends can visit and stay short term there is no provision for them to bring their own caravan.

The Place Standard consultation identified the following gaps:

- A transit pitch.
- Provision for future need from older and disabled travellers.

There is currently no waiting list for the Falkirk Council Gypsy/Traveller site.

## North Ayrshire

FOI response states no allocations have been made from any budgets for the redevelopment of the site or to address climate change/net zero issues (conversation have been ongoing with residents and plans are being made for redevelopment of site but no budget/funding identified for this)

Local Housing Strategy states Our research has indicated that there is sufficient accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers in our area. Our Gypsy/Traveller population has told us that their preferred housing solution is the Council owned site. Our site in Irvine has sixteen pitches (four are level access), each with its own amenity building where hot water, bathing and kitchen facilities are provided, and electricity is available at a reduced cost. While our site meets the quality standards described in the Scottish Government's 'Improving Gypsy/Traveller Sites' since 2018, we understand this to be a minimum standard, and we have continued to improve and upgrade the site. Moving forward we remain committed to ensuring our site continues to meet the needs of our Gypsy/Traveller community and we will explore options to identify the most appropriate upgrades and changes that we can carry out on site, to best support our residents.

On average, we have around **40** unauthorised encampments in annually, this number includes multiple counts of the same family who may stay at various locations during their time in our area.

SHIP states 'The Council has not identified any additional demand issues in relation to accommodation for gypsy/ travellers. The Council has reviewed the condition of the permanent site at Redburn Grove, Irvine in consultation with residents to identify any future maintenance

and investment works. An options appraisal is underway to develop plans and a business case for site improvements. The Council will make an application to the Scottish Government's Gypsy/ Traveller Accommodation Fund to seek funding for any necessary renovation or improvements when this is complete.'

## West Dunbartonshire

FOI response states budget for planned investment not separated out to show specific investment to Gypsy Traveller site, they work with yearly budgets.

Local Housing Strategy states There is one long-established site in West Dunbartonshire for Gypsy/Travellers. This provides **20** pitches for a largely settled community.

Recent consultation, as part of the LHS, highlighted that more pitches or different housing options such as cabins may be required to respond to the changing profile of residents who live there. We will commit to exploring this in more detail with the community. Further, we do have more transient gypsy populations who may locate in the area for short periods. These groups have different needs to our residents who live in the permanent site.

2016 HDNA states 'None of the areas with local authority Gypsy/Traveller site provision recorded significant unmet need or demand for pitches. The evidence base on Gypsy/Traveller and Travelling Showpeople is currently outdated. The partner authorities are jointly developing a brief with a view to updating the findings of the 2007 study (based on secondary data) to provide a clearer understanding of housing needs and appropriateness of current provision.'

SHIP states 'The Council is currently engaged with the residents of our Gypsy/Travellers site over much needed improvements. We are in discussion with the Scottish Government over accessing their Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Fund but if this fails, we will give consideration to the option of accessing the AHSP fund. Accordingly, the Dennystoun Forge site is included in the SHIP as a possible future project of **20** homes. WDC propose to develop **20** homes at the Gypsy Traveller site through the SHIP if alternative Scottish Government funding is not available.'





# References

# References

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