



# **Darlington Borough Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)**

Report of Findings

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# 1. Executive Summary

## Summary of Key Findings and Conclusions

### Introduction and Methodology

- 1.1 The primary purpose of this Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in Darlington Borough Council (the Council) area.
- 1.2 This GTAA provides a credible evidence base which can be used to support the preparation of Local Plan Policies and, where appropriate, the provision of new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots for the period 2025/26 to 2042/43.
- 1.3 This covers the Council's new Local Plan period, and the 15-year requirements set out in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS). The outcomes of this study supersede the outcomes of the previous GTAA for the Council.
- 1.4 The GTAA has sought to understand the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller population (there were no Travelling Showpeople identified) in the Council area through a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder interviews, and engagement with members of the Travelling Community. This includes those living on all known sites and encampments, as well as seeking to engage with households living in bricks and mortar accommodation. The GTAA has also sought to assess whether there is any need for transit provision to be provided.
- 1.5 A total of 111 interviews or proxy interviews were completed with Gypsies and Travellers living on sites in Darlington, or on the roadside. Despite the efforts that were made it was not possible to complete any interviews with households living in bricks and mortar.
- 1.6 A total of 6 stakeholder interviews were also completed.
- 1.7 The baseline date for the study is September 2025.

### Background

- 1.8 Paragraph 4 in the PPTS sets out that *local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning.*
- 1.9 Paragraph 9 in the PPTS sets out that *local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 and plot targets for travelling showpeople as defined in Annex 1 which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area.*
- 1.10 Paragraph 10 in the PPTS sets out that Local Planning Authorities should, in producing their Local Plan: *(a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets; (b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.*

- 1.11 The PPTS in Annex 1 states that *For the purposes of this planning policy, “pitch” means a pitch on a “gypsy and traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “travelling showpeople” site (often called a “yard”).*
- 1.12 Paragraph 63 in the NPPF states that [emphasis added] *“Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; **travellers**<sup>27</sup>; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.”*
- 1.13 Footnote 27 to that paragraph states that *“Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers’ housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document.”*
- 1.14 Both the NPPF and PPTS refer to the provision of Travellers’ sites/yards to meet needs, and the PPTS refers to setting *pitch/plot* targets. For ease, and consistency, this GTAA sets out the accommodation needs as needs for pitches/plots. In most cases, the need should be met through provision of a pitch/plot. However, in some circumstances the accommodation needs may be more appropriately met through provision of other *alternative* suitable accommodation (for example through additional touring caravans on sites and yards). So, in this GTAA any reference to *pitch/plot* means *pitch/plot or pitch/plot equivalent*.
- 1.15 This GTAA provides evidence of accommodation needs in line with both the PPTS and NPPF requirements. This evidence will help to inform the Council’s policies in their emerging Local Plan including the setting of local pitch/plot targets and the allocation of sites/yards to meet identified accommodation needs.
- 1.16 ORS recommend that Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan Policies should give consideration to addressing need from households that meet the 2024 PPTS planning definition through the allocation of new pitches or plots – or equivalents; through the intensification or expansion of the existing sites and yards where need has been identified; and through consideration of granting planning permission for any temporary and unauthorised sites or yards where this is felt to be appropriate in relation to relevant Development Management Policies.
- 1.17 The Council should also put in place a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy (as suggested in Paragraph 11 in the PPTS) to manage the need from Undetermined Households, as well as to deal with any potential windfall applications, potential need from in-migration, or any need arising from bricks and mortar.
- 1.18 The findings of this report should be considered as part of future housing mix and type within the context of the assessment of overall housing need in relation to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Whilst the findings in this report are aggregated totals for the whole of Darlington, the Council have been provided with more detailed breakdowns to support the preparation of any future Local Plan Policies.

## Key Findings

### Pitch Needs – Gypsies and Travellers

- 1.19 In September 2025 the Council identified 168 Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Darlington:
- » 4 public sites (89 pitches);
  - » 19 private sites with permanent planning permission (62 pitches);
  - » 1 unauthorised site (1 pitch);

- » 16 public transit pitches on a public site.

<sup>1.20</sup> Our research concluded that 127 Gypsy or Traveller households met the 2024 PPTS planning definition and there were 25 households where it was not possible to confirm their status. These 25 households are also likely to meet the 2024 PPTS planning definition and are referred to as Undetermined Households for the purposes of this GTAA.

<sup>1.21</sup> Our research identified a need for 31 pitches emerging from the 127 households that met the 2024 PPTS planning definition. This is made up of:

- » 16 pitches for concealed/doubled-up households or single adults;
- » 10 pitches to meet a 5-year need from teenagers;
- » 4 pitches from roadside/in-migration;
- » 29 pitches from new household formation, using a formation rate of 1.40% derived from the household demographics.
- » There was also a supply of 3 pitches with planning permission that are yet to be developed on one of the public sites, and 25 pitches from a new public site that has been granted outline planning permission and which is scheduled to be operational by 2029, following the submission of a full planning application in Autumn 2026.

<sup>1.22</sup> There is also a need for 15 pitches emerging from the 25 Undetermined Households. This is made up of:

- » A modelled need for 5 pitches for concealed/doubled-up households or single adults;
- » A modelled need for 2 pitches to meet a 5-year need from teenagers; and
- » 8 pitches from new household formation, using the ORS national formation rate of 1.50%.
- » Whilst they have not been considered as formal components of supply it was identified that there are at least 6 undeveloped pitches with planning permission on 2 of the sites where it was not possible to complete any interviews. The Council should consider whether these pitches can meet a proportion of current unidentified need from these sites – therefore reducing need.

<sup>1.23</sup> The overall pitch needs for Gypsies and Travellers for the period 2025/26 – 2042/43 are summarised below:

**Figure 1: Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Darlington (2025-42)**

Status	2025-2042
Need from households who meet the Planning Definition	31
Undetermined	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>

<sup>1.24</sup> The need from households that meet the planning definition and for Undetermined Households can be distributed across year periods as shown below:

**Figure 2: Need for Gypsy and Traveller households by year periods**

Year Period	Dates	PPTS Need	Undetermined Need
1 – 5	2025-29	2	7
6 – 10	2030-34	10	3
11 – 15	2035-39	12	3
16 – 18	2040-42	7	2
<b>0 – 18</b>	<b>2025-42</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15</b>

## Plot Needs – Travelling Showpeople

- <sup>1.25</sup> In September 2025 there were no Travelling Showpeople yards identified in Darlington so there is no current or future need for plots.

## Recommendations

### Gypsy and Traveller Recommendations

- <sup>1.26</sup> The recommendations for addressing need from Gypsies and Travellers are set out below:

- Pitch Content:** In general terms, need identified in a GTAA is seen as need for pitches. As set out in Chapter 4 of this report, the now withdrawn Government Guidance on [Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites](#) recommended that, as a general guide, an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, parking space for two vehicles, and a small garden area. This guidance relates primarily to the provision of pitches on public sites but can also be more broadly applied to the provision of pitches on private sites.
- Pitch Size:** Whilst there is no standard size for a Gypsy and Traveller pitch, there are some examples of guidance<sup>1</sup> at a local authority level that recommend average pitch sizes of between 320m<sup>2</sup> and 500m<sup>2</sup> but also suggest that a variety of pitch sizes – including small, medium and large pitches - can enable different sized families to be accommodated on sites (equivalent to two, three and four-bedroom houses) and can contribute to affordability.
- Public Sites:** For need arising from public sites the Council will need to consider the expansion or intensification of these sites, or for new sites(s), as it is unlikely that this need could be addressed through the provision of pitches on new private sites. It is understood that there is currently an outline planning permission for a new public site in Darlington that will provide an additional 25 pitches. A full planning permission is expected to be submitted in September 2026 and the new site is expected to be operational by 2029. The Council are also considering providing a further 8 public pitches through an extension to one of the public sites on land that is owned by the Council. In addition, there are 16 public transit pitches on one of the public sites and the Council should consider whether some of this land could be used to provide permanent public pitches, alongside a reduced number of transit pitches.

<sup>1</sup> Leeds City Council: [Gypsy and Traveller Site Design Guide \(2020\)](#) and East Devon District Council: [Gypsy and Traveller Site Design and Layout Guidance \(2017\)](#).

4. **Private Sites:** For need arising from private sites the Council will need to consider the expansion or intensification of these sites, or to address need through new site/pitch allocations.
5. **Alternative Approaches (1):** The Council should also consider alternative approaches to dealing with need from single adults and from teenagers as it is unlikely that they will need a full pitch of their own in the short to medium term. This need could be addressed through permitting additional touring caravans on existing sites/pitches which are, generally, each equivalent to the provision of a pitch, as opposed to more formally set out pitches. These approaches could be explored through the completion of a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (see Recommendation 11 below).
6. **Alternative Approaches (2):** The second approach to consider is for private sites occupied by larger extended family groups. Again, sites like this may be able to meet the overall accommodation needs through a combination of shared static caravans, tourers and dayrooms on existing sites – as opposed to more formally set out sites with separate pitches. It is common for conditions in Decision Notices for Traveller sites to simply place limits on the numbers and types of caravans as opposed to placing limits on the number of pitches. These approaches could also be explored through the completion of a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (see Recommendation 11 below).
7. **Undetermined Need:** The Council will also need to carefully consider how to address any potential need from Undetermined Households; from households seeking to move to Darlington (in-migration), or from households currently living in bricks and mortar who may wish to move to a site. In terms of Local Plan Policies, the Council should continue to use or put in place Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies as suggested in the PPTS. In addition, the Council should consider whether currently undeveloped pitches on undetermined sites that have planning permission can address all or a proportion of the current undetermined need.
8. **Future Need:** Future need from new household formation could be met through natural turnover of pitches over time.
9. **Monitoring:** The Council should continue to monitor any changes to the site baseline through new applications and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites to provide 5 years' worth of sites against locally set targets as required by the PPTS.
10. **Supporting Data:** Whilst the findings in this report are aggregated totals for the whole of Darlington due to data protection issues, the Council have more detailed data to enable an accurate review of Local Plan allocations to be made.
11. **Pitch Deliverability Assessment:** Finally, the Council should consider completing a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) to explore in more detail the capacity of existing sites to accommodate additional pitches and/or caravans to meet identified needs. The PDA should take into account the findings of this assessment to inform emerging Local Plan policies and may be updated if appropriate.

## Transit Recommendations

<sup>1.27</sup> The recommendations for addressing transit need are set out below:

1. **Overall Transit Provision:** There are currently 16 public transit pitches on one of the public sites in Darlington. It is considered that these are appropriate to meet current levels on transit need in the

Borough. As such, it is not recommended that there is a need for any additional public transit provision in the area at this time<sup>2</sup>.

2. **Monitoring:** The situation relating to levels of unauthorised encampments should continue to be monitored. As well as information on the size and duration of the encampments, this monitoring should also seek to gather information from residents on the reasons for their stay in the local area; whether they have a permanent base or where they have travelled from; and whether they have any need or preference to settle permanently in the local area. This information should be collected as part of a welfare assessment (or similar).
3. **Review:** It is recommended that a review of the evidence base relating to unauthorised encampments, including the monitoring referred to above, should be undertaken on an annual basis. This will establish whether there is a need for investment in any new transit provision or emergency stopping places, or whether the current approach is preferable.
4. **Short-Term Approach:** In the short-term the Council should continue to use its current informal tolerated approach when dealing with unauthorised encampments and management-based approaches, such as negotiated stopping agreements, should continue to be considered.
5. **Management-Based Approaches:** The term 'negotiated stopping' is used to describe agreed short-term provision for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. It does not describe permanent 'built' transit sites but negotiated agreements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. Agreements are made between the Council and the (temporary) residents regarding expectations on both sides. See [www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk](http://www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk) for further information.
6. **Temporary Stopping Places:** Temporary stopping places can be made available at times of increased demand due to fairs or cultural celebrations that are attended by Gypsies and Travellers. A charge may be levied as determined by the local authority although they only need to provide basic facilities including: a cold-water supply; portable toilets; sewage disposal points; and refuse disposal facilities.

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 7 for further details.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 The primary purpose of this Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), is to provide a robust assessment of current and future need for Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in Darlington Borough Council.
- 2.2 The outcomes of the study will supersede the outcomes of the previous Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) completed for the Council
- 2.3 The study provides an evidence base to enable the Council to comply with their requirements towards Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing Act 1985, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2024, the Housing and Planning Act (2016), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 2.4 The GTAA provides a robust assessment of need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in the study area. It can be used to aid the implementation of the Council's Local Plan Policies and the provision of Traveller pitches and plots covering the period 2025/26 to 2042/43 to meet the 15-year requirements of the PPTS and the Council's new Local Plan period.
- 2.5 In addition to identifying current and future permanent accommodation needs, it seeks to identify any need for transit provision.
- 2.6 It also considers whether the Council should undertake a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) to inform the emerging Local Plan.
- 2.7 The study covers the needs of Gypsies (including English, Scottish, Welsh and Romany Gypsies), Irish Travellers, New (Age) Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople, but for ease of reference we have referred to the study as a Gypsy and Traveller (and Travelling Showpeople) Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).
- 2.8 The baseline date for the study is September 2025.

### Definitions

#### [Lisa Smith v The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and others \[2022\]](#)

- 2.9 In October 2022 the Court of Appeal handed down judgment in *Lisa Smith v The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities [2022] EWCA Civ 1391*. The case was a challenge to a specific appeal decision and concerned whether the planning definition of Gypsies and Travellers contained in Annex 1 of the PPTS (2015) is discriminatory against Travellers who are settled and who no longer travel for work due to old age or disability. The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal and quashed the Inspectors decision from 2018 and referred the case back to The Secretary of State for redetermination.
- 2.10 Whilst certain parts of the PPTS planning definition of a Traveller were found to be discriminatory, as the PPTS 2015 itself was not the subject of the case it was not quashed or declared unlawful at this time.

- 2.11 As a result of the Lisa Smith Judgement, changes to the PPTS in 2023, and following consultation on the NPPF in 2024, the Government made changes to the PPTS in December 2024 to effectively bring all Gypsies and Travellers under the current planning definition.
- 2.12 In late 2025 a note was circulated to all Local Planning Authorities in England on behalf of Friends, Families and Travellers - a leading national charity that supports the Travelling Community. The note was prepared by Marc Willers KC from Garden Court Chambers and sought to provide an independent legal opinion on the interpretation and application of the planning definition of a Traveller contained in Annex 1 of the PPTS (2024).
- 2.13 ORS have reviewed the legal opinions of Marc Willers KC and agree with his conclusions in that the current PPTS planning definition of a Traveller now includes a requirement to assess the accommodation needs of all ethnic Gypsies and Travellers, also including New Travellers, but would appear to exclude economic travellers (i.e. Van Dwellers etc.). This is the same conclusion that ORS reached in their review of the 2024 PPTS planning definition when it was issued in December 2024 and this is reflected in our current approach to the analysis and reporting of our GTAA studies, including in Darlington
- » Following the changes to the PPTS in 2024 the planning definition of a Traveller now includes all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan.
  - » As a result of this it can be concluded that all ethnic Gypsies and Travellers now meet the PPTS 2024 planning definition of a Traveller.
  - » There were no changes to the planning definition of a Travelling Showperson made in 2024 but it is assumed that all Travelling Showpeople will meet the Annex 1 planning definition.

## Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2024

- 2.14 For the purposes of the planning system, the current planning definition of a Traveller is set out in [PPTS \(2024\)](#). The planning definition set out in Annex 1 states that:

*1. For the purposes of this planning policy “gypsies and travellers” means:*

*Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.*

*2. For the purposes of this planning policy, “travelling showpeople” means:*

*Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.*

*3. For the purposes of this planning policy, “travellers” means “gypsies and travellers” and “travelling showpeople” as defined above.*

4. For the purposes of this planning policy, “pitch” means a pitch on a “gypsy and traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “travelling showpeople” site (often called a “yard”). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for “gypsies and travellers” and mixed-use plots for “travelling showpeople”, which may / will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) December 2024

## Definition of Travelling

- 2.15 One of the most important questions that GTAA’s need to address in terms of applying the planning definition is *what constitutes a nomadic way of life or nomadism*. This has been determined through case law.
- 2.16 **R v South Hams District Council (1994)** – defined Gypsies as “persons who wander or travel for the purpose of making or seeking their livelihood (not persons who travel from place to place without any connection between their movements and their means of livelihood.)” This includes ‘born’ Gypsies and Travellers as well as ‘elective’ Travellers such as New Age Travellers.
- 2.17 In **Maidstone BC v Secretary of State for the Environment and Dunn (2006)**, it was held that a Romany Gypsy who bred horses and travelled to horse fairs at Appleby, Stow-in-the-Wold and the New Forest, where he bought and sold horses, and who remained away from his permanent site for up to two months of the year, at least partly in connection with this traditional Gypsy activity, was entitled to be accorded Gypsy status.
- 2.18 In **Greenwich LBC v Powell (1989)**, Lord Bridge of Harwich stated that a person could be a statutory Gypsy if they led a nomadic way of life *only seasonally*.
- 2.19 The definition was widened further by the decision in **R v Shropshire CC ex p Bungay (1990)**. The case concerned a Gypsy family that had not travelled for some 15 years in order to care for elderly and infirm parents. An aggrieved resident living in the area of the family’s recently approved Gypsy site sought Judicial Review of the Local Authority’s decision to accept that the family had retained their Gypsy status even though they had not travelled for some considerable time. Dismissing the claim, the judge held that a person could remain a Gypsy even if he or she did not travel, provided that their nomadism was held in abeyance and not abandoned.
- 2.20 **Wrexham County Borough Council v National Assembly of Wales and Others (2003)** determined that households and individuals could continue to lead a nomadic way of life with a permanent base which they set out from and return to.
- 2.21 Following the changes to the PPTS in 2024 the planning definition now includes all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan.
- 2.22 As a result of this it can be concluded that all ethnic Gypsies and Travellers now meet the PPTS 2024 planning definition of a Traveller.
- 2.23 There were no changes to the planning definition of a Travelling Showperson made in 2024 but is assumed that all Travelling Showpeople will meet the Annex 1 planning definition.

## Legislation and Guidance for Gypsies and Travellers

2.24 Policy concerning Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sits within a complex legislative and national policy framework and this study must be viewed in the context of this legislation and guidance. For example, the following key pieces of legislation and guidance are relevant when developing policies relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople:

- » [The Housing Act, 1985](#)
- » [The Equality Act, 2010](#)
- » [The Housing and Planning Act, 2016](#)
- » [Planning Practice Guidance<sup>3</sup> \(PPG\)](#)
- » [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites \(PPTS\), 2024](#)
- » [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\), 2024<sup>4</sup>](#)

2.25 In addition, Case Law, Ministerial Statements, the outcomes of Local Plan Examinations and Planning Appeals, and Judicial Reviews also need to be taken into consideration. Relevant examples have been included in this report where appropriate.

2.26 The primary guidance for undertaking the assessment of housing need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is set out in the PPTS (2024). It should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024.

### Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) 2024

2.27 The PPTS (2024, Paragraph 4), sets out the overall aims of the policy in respect of Traveller sites:

- a) That local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning.
- b) To ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites.
- c) To encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale.
- d) That plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development<sup>5</sup>.
- e) To promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be travellers who cannot provide their own sites.
- f) That plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective.
- g) For local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies.

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<sup>3</sup> With particular reference to the sections on Housing needs of different groups (May 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Consultation on the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is open until March 10, 2026, inviting feedback on significant proposed reforms to the planning system in England.

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 16 in the PPTS goes on to state ‘...unless the exceptions set out in Chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework apply.’

- h) To increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply.
- i) To reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions.
- j) To enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare, and employment infrastructure.
- k) For local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

2.28 PPTS states in Paragraph 9 that:

*Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 and plot targets for travelling showpeople as defined in Annex 1 which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities.*

2.29 PPTS goes on to state in Paragraph 10 that Local Planning Authorities should in producing their Local Plan:

- a) Identify and annually update a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets.
- b) Identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.
- c) Consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints across its area (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries).
- d) Relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density.
- e) Protect local amenity and environment.

2.30 Local Authorities have a duty to ensure a 5-year land supply to meet any need that is identified Traveller sites. However, PPTS also sets out in Paragraph 11 that:

*Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers whilst respecting the interests of the settled community.*

## National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

2.31 The most recent version of the NPPF was issued in December 2024.

- <sup>2.32</sup> Paragraph 62 of the NPPF sets out that in determining the minimum number of homes needed, *strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance.*
- <sup>2.33</sup> Paragraph 63 then states that [emphasis added] *Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; **travellers**; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.*
- <sup>2.34</sup> Footnote 27 to this section states that *'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers' housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document.'*

# 3. Methodology

## Background

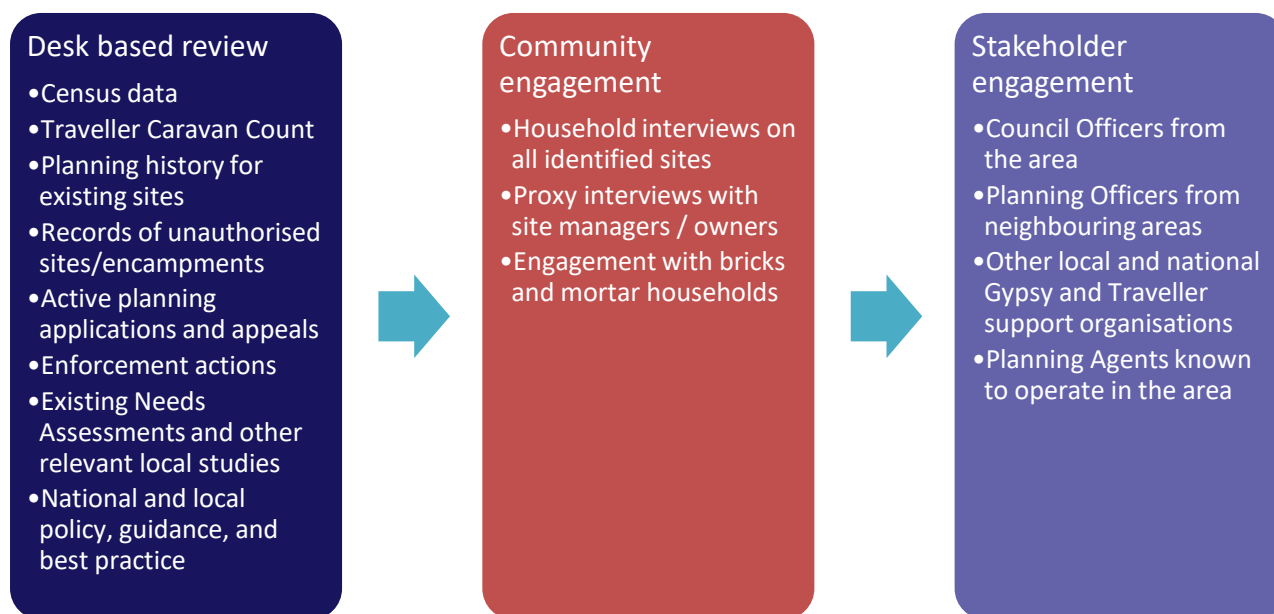
- 3.1 Opinion Research Services (ORS) have been undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments (GTAAAs) for over fifteen years. Our approach has been regularly refined in light of changes to PPTS in 2015, 2023 and 2024, the Housing and Planning Act (2016), the NPPF (2024), and the PPG, as well as the outcomes of Local Plan Examinations and Planning Appeals.
- 3.2 PPTS contains a number of requirements for local authorities which must be addressed in a GTAA. Paragraph 7 in the PPTS sets out that local authorities should (a) *pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities (including discussing travellers' accommodation needs with travellers themselves, their representative bodies and local support groups;* (b) *cooperate with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups; other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up- to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of their areas over the lifespan of their development plan, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities;* and (c) *use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and make planning decisions.*
- 3.3 ORS would note that the ORS GTAA methodology has been repeatedly found to be sound and robust, including through Local Plan Examinations in multiple areas across England<sup>6</sup>.

## Our approach to Fieldwork

- 3.4 The stages below provide a summary of the methodology that was used to complete this study. These stages can be completed concurrently.

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<sup>6</sup> ORS have attended Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Examination Sessions in areas including Bedford, Brentwood, Bristol, Cambridge, Castle Point, Central Bedfordshire, Charnwood, Cheltenham, Colchester, Cotswold, Daventry, Ealing, East Hertfordshire, Elmbridge, Gloucester, Hounslow, Kings Lynn, Leicester, Maldon, Milton Keynes, Newark and Sherwood, Newham, Runnymede, Rutland, South Cambridgeshire, South Northamptonshire, South Staffordshire, Spelthorne, St Albans, Tewkesbury, and Waverley.



## Desk-Based Review

3.5 The secondary data that was reviewed and collated included:

- » Census data.
- » MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count data.
- » Planning history for existing sites.
- » Records of unauthorised sites/encampments.
- » Information on active planning applications and appeals.
- » Information on active enforcement actions.
- » Existing Needs Assessments and other relevant local studies.
- » National and local policy, guidance, and best practice.

## Stakeholder Engagement

3.6 Stakeholder engagement involves three core groups; local Council Officers, neighbouring Planning Officers and representative bodies.

3.7 Council Officers help provide a fuller understanding of local issues. This includes information about the progress made in addressing any needs identified in previous GTAAs and about any unauthorised developments.

3.8 Planning Officers from neighbouring authorities allow us to explore cross-border issues including transit provision.

3.9 Speaking with other organisations and agencies who represent Travellers also allows the assessment to take account of any particular issues affecting these communities.

## Community Engagement

- 3.10 Once we have identified all authorised and unauthorised sites/yards and encampments in the study area we seek to complete an interview with each household. ORS use a census rather than sampling approach as we consider this to be more robust. Sample based approaches can lead to an underestimate of need and GTAA's using sampling are regularly challenged by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 3.11 ORS make at least three separate attempts to contact a household including leaving calling cards and offering appointments and the opportunity to complete an interview over the telephone.
- 3.12 Interviews are undertaken by experienced fieldworkers who work on our GTAA studies across England and Wales. To ensure consistency in data collection ORS use a standard questionnaire which can be seen in **Appendix C**. The interview captures current demographic characteristics, their current or future accommodation needs, whether there is any over-crowding or the presence of concealed households. It also asks about the type of pitches households may require in the future – for example private or socially rented, together with any features they may wish to be provided.
- 3.13 The survey includes questions about the travelling characteristics of household members. Whilst responses to these questions are less relevant now following the changes to the PPTS in 2024, ORS feel that this is still useful data to collect. This information is useful when seeking to address any identified need as those who do and don't travel may have different pitch/plot requirements.
- 3.14 Where we are unable to complete an interview, we will attempt to gather basic information about each pitch/plot through a proxy interview from sources including neighbouring residents and site management.
- 3.15 In addition to the household and proxy interviews on-site, fieldworkers make an overall physical assessment of each site/yard to determine any vacant pitches/plots and to identify any potential opportunities for intensification or expansion of sites/yards to meet current and future needs.

## Bricks and Mortar Households

- 3.16 Following the changes to the PPTS in 2024 the planning definition now includes all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan. This also includes households living in bricks and mortar who can demonstrate a cultural tradition of nomadism. Traveller households living in bricks and mortar have always been included in GTAA's completed by ORS so the changes to the planning definition in 2024 have not changed how these households are dealt with in the GTAA.
- 3.17 The 2021 Census recorded 135 households who identified as Gypsies or Irish Travellers who lived in a house or bungalow in Darlington and 13 living in a flat or maisonette. The 2021 Census also recorded 28 households who identified as Roma who lived in a house or bungalow in Darlington and 20 living in a flat or maisonette. It should be noted that Roma households generally prefer to live in housing and not on sites.
- 3.18 ORS apply a rigorous approach to making contact with bricks and mortar households as this is a common issue raised at Local Plan Examinations and Planning Appeals. Contacts are sought through a range of sources including the interviews with people on existing sites and yards; information from stakeholder interviews; information from housing registers; and information from planning agents known to operate in the area. Interviews are sought with all identified households.

- 3.19 Through this approach the GTAA endeavour to enable households living in bricks and mortar the opportunity to make their views known.
- 3.20 ORS do not make assumptions on the overall needs from household in bricks and mortar based on the outcomes of any interviews that are completed, as in our experience this leads to a significant over-estimate of the number of households wishing to move to a site or a yard.
- 3.21 In summary, ORS do not model need from households living in bricks and mortar and instead rely on any local evidence of need that is identified. Any need from bricks and mortar households that comes forward in the future should be addressed through Local Plan Criteria-Based Policies as set out in the recommendations in this GTAA.

## Timing of the Fieldwork

- 3.22 ORS are fully aware of the transient nature of many travelling communities and subsequent seasonal variations in site and yard occupancy. ORS aim to complete fieldwork during the non-travelling season, and to avoid days of known local or national events.
- 3.23 The fieldwork for this GTAA was completed over an extended period between March 2025 and September 2025.

## Our Analysis

### Applying the PPTS Planning Definition

- 3.24 The primary change to the PPTS in December 2024 in relation to the assessment of need was the change to the definition of a Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson for planning purposes. Wherever possible we use the data collected in household interviews to identify if they meet the planning definition. In some cases information from planning applications and planning appeal Decision Notices are also used.
- 3.25 Through the inclusion of *all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan* in the Annex 1 definition, this now includes all Travellers. There were no changes to the definition of Travelling Showpeople in Annex 1 and all are now assumed to meet the planning definition.

### Dealing with Undetermined Households

- 3.26 A GTAA has to consider the needs of any households where it is not possible to determine if they meet the planning definition – usually because we have been unable to complete an interview. These are defined as Undetermined Households.
- 3.27 Whilst there is no guidance that sets out how the needs of these households should be addressed ORS consider it necessary to estimate potential need from these households. This is an additional need figure over and above the need identified for households that meet the planning definition.
- 3.28 The estimate sought to identify potential current and future need from any pitches/plots known to be temporary or unauthorised through modelling need from concealed-doubled-up households, from teenagers based on the outcomes from completed interviews, and through new household formation. This modelling

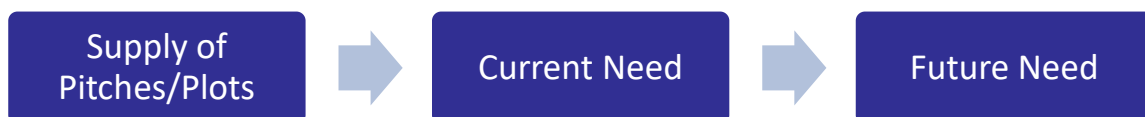
applies the proportion of need from households that were interviewed to the Undetermined Households. This modelled need is also accounted for in an increased base for the calculation of future household formation.

- 3.29 As the demographics of the Undetermined Households are unknown, ORS use our national household formation rate of 1.50% in our analysis to estimate future need.
- 3.30 Following the changes to the planning definition in PPTS 2024 it has been assumed that all Undetermined Households will meet the planning definition. However, it is recommended that needs from Undetermined Households are addressed through Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies and not through specific allocations.
- 3.31 The ORS approach to addressing the need arising from Undetermined Households was supported by the Planning Inspector for a Local Plan Examination for Maldon District Council, Essex (June 2017). He concluded [emphasis added]:

*The Council's stance is that any need arising from 'unknowns' should be a matter left to the planning application process. Modifications to Policy H6 have been put forward by the Council setting out criteria for such a purpose, which I consider further below. To my mind, that is an appropriate approach. While there remains a possibility that up to 10 further pitches may be needed, that cannot be said to represent identified need. **It would be unreasonable to demand that the Plan provide for needs that have not been established to exist.***

## Calculating the Current and Future Need

- 3.32 To identify need, PPTS requires an assessment for current and future pitch/plot requirements but does not provide a standard methodology for this. However, as with any housing assessment, the underlying calculation can be broken down into a relatively small number of factors. In this case, the key issue is to compare the supply of pitches/plots available for occupation with the current and future needs of the population.
- 3.33 A summary of the approach that has been taken is show below.



## Supply of Pitches/Plots

- 3.34 Our desk-based research and fieldwork determines the vacant, and potentially available supply in the study area:
- » Current vacant pitches/plots on public sites;
  - » Pitches/plots on public sites currently with planning consent due to be developed within 5 years;
  - » Pitches/plots vacated by people on public sites moving to housing;
  - » Pitches/plots vacated by people on public sites moving from the study area (out-migration).
- 3.35 It is important when seeking to identify supply from vacant pitches/plots that they are in fact available for general occupation – i.e. on a public or social rented site/yard, or on a private site/yard that is run on a

commercial basis with anyone being able to rent a pitch/plot if they are available. Typically, vacant pitches/plots on small private family sites/yards are not included as components of available supply but can be used to meet any current and future need from the family living on the site/yard.

## Current Need

3.36 The second stage is to identify components of current need:

- » Households on unauthorised developments for which planning permission is not expected.
- » Households living on sites/yards with temporary planning permission.
- » Concealed, doubled-up or over-crowded households (including single adults).
- » Teenage children in need of a pitch/plot of their own in the next 5 years.
- » In-migration/roadside.
- » Households in bricks and mortar needing to move to sites/yards.
- » Households in need on waiting lists for public sites.

3.37 ORS are increasingly identifying households and adult household members who have been forced to leave sites/yards due to over-crowding or exceeding planning conditions on the number of caravans permitted on sites/yards. These households are typically living on the roadside or doubling-up on pitches/plots in neighbouring local authorities. ORS include these households as components of hidden need and term them *displaced in-migration*.

## Future Need

3.38 The final stage is to identify components of future need. This includes the component of new household formation.

3.39 Household formation rates are often the subject of challenge at appeals or examinations. ORS firmly believe that any household formation rates should use a robust local evidence base, rather than simply relying on national precedent. The approach taken is set out in more detail in Chapter 7 of this report.

## Pitch/Plot Turnover

3.40 Some assessments of need make use of pitch/plot turnover as an ongoing component of supply. ORS do not agree with this approach or with making any assumptions about annual turnover rates. ORS consider that this approach frequently ends up significantly under-estimating need as, in the majority of cases, vacant pitches/plots are not in fact available to meet any local need.

3.41 The use of turnover has been the subject of a number of Inspectors Decisions, for example **APP/J3720/A/13/2208767** found a GTAA to be unsound when using turnover and concluded:

*West Oxfordshire Council relies on a GTAA published in 2013. This identifies an immediate need for 6 additional pitches. However, the GTAA methodology treats pitch turnover as a component of supply. This is only the case if there is net outward migration, yet no such scenario is apparent in West Oxfordshire. Based on the evidence before me I consider the underlying criticism of the GTAA to be justified and that unmet need is likely to be higher than that in the findings in the GTAA.*

- 3.42 In addition, [\*Best Practice for Assessing the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers\*](#) produced jointly in June 2016 by organisations including Friends, Families and Travellers, the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit, the York Travellers Trust, the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group, Garden Court Chambers and Leeds GATE concluded that:

*Assessments involving any form of pitch turnover in their supply relies upon making assumptions, a practice best avoided. Turnover is naturally very difficult to assess accurately and in practice does not contribute meaningfully to additional supply so should be very carefully assessed in line with local trends. Mainstream housing assessments are not based on the assumption that turnover within the existing stock can provide for general housing needs.*

- 3.43 As such, other than current vacant pitches/plots that are known to be available, annual pitch/plot turnover has not been considered as a formal component of supply in this GTAA. However, natural turnover of pitches/plots on public and private sites/yards should continue to be monitored by the Council. In particular, the natural turnover of pitches/plots can help to meet future need over time from new household formation.

## Transit Provision

- 3.44 GTAA studies require the identification of demand for transit provision. Whilst the majority of Gypsies and Travellers have permanent bases either on sites/yards or in bricks and mortar and no longer travel, other members of the community either travel permanently or for part of the year.
- 3.45 Due to the mobile nature of the population a range of sites/yards can be provided to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers as they move through different areas.
- » **Transit sites** - full facilities where Gypsies and Travellers might live temporarily (for up to three months) – for example, to work locally, for holidays or to visit family and friends.
  - » **Emergency stopping places** - more limited facilities.
  - » **Temporary sites and stopping places** - only temporary facilities to cater for an event.
  - » **Negotiated stopping places** - agreements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time.
- 3.46 Transit sites serve a specific function of meeting the needs of Gypsy and Traveller households who are visiting an area or who are passing through on the way to somewhere else. A transit site typically has a restriction on the length of stay of usually around 12 weeks and has a range of facilities such as water supply, electricity, and amenity blocks.
- 3.47 An alternative to or in addition to a transit site is an emergency stopping place. This type of site also has restrictions on the length of time for which someone can stay on it but usually has more limited facilities with typically only a source of water and chemical toilet disposal provided.
- 3.48 Another alternative is negotiated stopping. The term negotiated stopping is used to describe agreed short-term provision for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. It does not include permanent built transit sites but negotiated agreements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. Agreements are made between the local authority and the (temporary) residents regarding expectations on both sides.

- 3.49 Temporary stopping places can be made available at times of increased demand due to fairs or cultural celebrations that are attended by Gypsies and Travellers. A charge may be levied as determined by the local authority although they only need to provide basic facilities including: a cold-water supply; portable toilets; sewerage disposal point and refuse disposal facilities.
- 3.50 The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (Section 62a) is particularly important with regard to the issue of Gypsy and Traveller transit site provision. Section 62a of the Act allows the police to direct trespassers to remove themselves and their vehicles and property from any land where a suitable pitch is available for the caravan or each of the caravans on a relevant caravan site which is situated in the local authority's area (or within the county in two-tier local authority areas). Relevant sites need to be managed by a Local Authority or a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). The police have no powers to direct people to private transit sites or yards.
- 3.51 Consideration also has to be given to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act which came in to force in June 2022. Part 4 of the Act gives the Police additional powers to deal with unauthorised encampments through new offences relating to residing on land without consent in or with a vehicle and new powers in relation to the seizure of property.
- 3.52 In order to investigate the potential need for transit provision when undertaking work to support the GTAA, ORS sought to undertake analysis of any records of unauthorised sites and encampments, as well as information from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Traveller Caravan Count. The outcomes of the Stakeholder Interviews with Council Officers and with Officers from neighbouring planning authorities have also been taken into consideration when determining this element of need in the study area.

## Approaches to Meeting Identified Need

- 3.53 Paragraph 4 in the PPTS sets out that *local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning.*
- 3.54 Paragraph 9 in the PPTS sets out that *local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 and plot targets for travelling showpeople as defined in Annex 1 which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area.*
- 3.55 Paragraph 10 in the PPTS sets out that Local Planning Authorities should, in producing their Local Plan: (a) *identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets; (b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.*
- 3.56 The PPTS in Annex 1 states that *For the purposes of this planning policy, "pitch" means a pitch on a "gypsy and traveller" site and "plot" means a pitch on a "travelling showpeople" site (often called a "yard").*
- 3.57 Paragraph 63 in the NPPF states that [emphasis added] *"Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; **travellers**<sup>27</sup>; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes."*

- 3.58 Footnote 27 to that paragraph states that “*Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers’ housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document.*”
- 3.59 Both the NPPF and PPTS refer to the provision of Travellers’ *sites/yards* to meet needs, and the PPTS refers to setting *pitch/plot* targets. For ease, and consistency, this GTAA sets out the accommodation needs as needs for pitches/plots. In most cases, the need should be met through provision of a pitch/plot. However, in some circumstances the accommodation needs may be more appropriately met through provision of other *alternative* suitable accommodation (for example through additional touring caravans on sites and yards). So, in this GTAA any reference to *pitch/plot* means *pitch/plot or pitch/plot equivalent*.
- 3.60 This GTAA provides evidence of accommodation needs in line with both the PPTS and NPPF requirements. This evidence will help to inform the Council’s policies in their emerging Local Plan including the setting of local pitch/plot targets and the allocation of sites/yards to meet identified accommodation needs.
- 3.61 ORS recommend that Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan Policies should give consideration to addressing need from households that meet the 2024 PPTS planning definition through the allocation of new pitches or plots – or equivalents; through the intensification or expansion of the existing sites and yards where need has been identified; and through consideration of granting planning permission for any temporary and unauthorised sites or yards where this is felt to be appropriate in relation to relevant Development Management Policies.
- 3.62 The Council should also put in place a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy (as suggested in Paragraph 11 in the PPTS) to manage the need from Undetermined Households, as well as to deal with any potential windfall applications, potential need from in-migration, or any need arising from bricks and mortar.

# 4. Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople Sites/Yards and Population

## Introduction

- 4.1 One of the main considerations of this GTAA is to provide evidence to support the provision of pitches and plots to meet the current and future accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

## Gypsies and Travellers

- 4.2 A pitch is an area normally occupied by one household, which typically contains enough space for one or two caravans but can vary in size<sup>7</sup>. A site is a collection of pitches which form a larger development for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 4.3 Whilst there is no standard size for a Gypsy and Traveller pitch, there are some examples of guidance<sup>8</sup> at a local authority level that recommend average pitch sizes of between 320m<sup>2</sup> and 500m<sup>2</sup> but also suggest that a variety of pitch sizes – including small, medium and large pitches - can enable different sized families to be accommodated on sites (equivalent to two, three and four-bedroom houses) and can contribute to affordability.

## Travelling Showpeople

- 4.4 For Travelling Showpeople, the most common descriptions used are a plot for the space occupied by one household and a yard for a collection of plots which are typically occupied by Travelling Showpeople.
- 4.5 Whilst there is also no standard size for a Travelling Showpeople plot, The Showmen's Guild<sup>9</sup> advocates an average plot size of 2,000m<sup>2</sup>. However, this should be viewed with some caution given the age of the guidance. In more recent years many Showpeople have sought to diversify their working practices and do not now need as much space for the storage or maintenance of larger rides. Recent planning applications in other local authorities have seen plans for new yards put forward including a variety of plot sizes.

## Public Residential Sites/Yards

- 4.6 The public and private provision of mainstream housing is also largely mirrored when considering Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. One common form of a Gypsy and Traveller site is a public residential site, which is

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<sup>7</sup> Whilst it has now been withdrawn, Government guidance on [Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites](#) recommended that, as a general guide, an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer [a static caravan or park home for example] and touring caravan, parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area.

<sup>8</sup> Leeds City Council: [Gypsy and Traveller Site Design Guide \(2020\)](#) and East Devon District Council: [Gypsy and Traveller Site Design and Layout Guidance \(2017\)](#).

<sup>9</sup> The Showmen's Guild: [Travelling Showpeople's Sites – A Planning Focus \(2007\)](#).

provided by a Local Authority or by a Registered Provider (usually a Housing Association). Pitches on public sites can be obtained through signing up to a waiting list, and the costs of running the sites are met from the rent paid by the tenants (similar to social housing).

## Private Residential Sites/Yards

- 4.7 The alternative to a public residential site/yard is a private residential site/yard for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, respectively. These result from individuals or families buying areas of land and then obtaining planning permission to live on them. Households can also rent pitches/plots on existing private sites/yards.
- 4.8 These two forms of accommodation are the equivalent to private ownership and private rent for those who live in bricks and mortar housing. Generally, the majority of Travelling Showpeople yards are privately owned and managed.

## Transit Provision

- 4.9 The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population also has other types of sites/yards due to its transient nature, as described more fully in Chapter 3. These are known as transit sites and they provide many of the same facilities as a residential site, except that there is a maximum occupancy period of residence which can vary from a few days or weeks to a period of months<sup>10</sup>.
- 4.10 An alternative to a transit site is an emergency or negotiated stopping place. This type of site also has restrictions on the length of time someone can stay on it but has much more limited facilities.
- 4.11 Both of these two types of transit provision are designed to accommodate, for a temporary period, Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople whilst they travel.
- 4.12 A number of authorities also operate an accepted encampments policy where short-term stopovers are tolerated without enforcement action.

## Unauthorised Sites/Yards

- 4.13 Further occurrences for the Traveller population are unauthorised developments and encampments. Unauthorised developments occur on land which is owned by the Travellers or with the approval of the landowner, but for which they do not have planning permission to use for residential purposes. Unauthorised encampments occur on land which is not owned by the Travellers and are usually referred to as roadside encampments.

## MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count

- 4.14 Another source of information available on the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population is the bi-annual [Traveller Caravan Count](#)<sup>11</sup> which is conducted by each Local Authority in England on a specific date

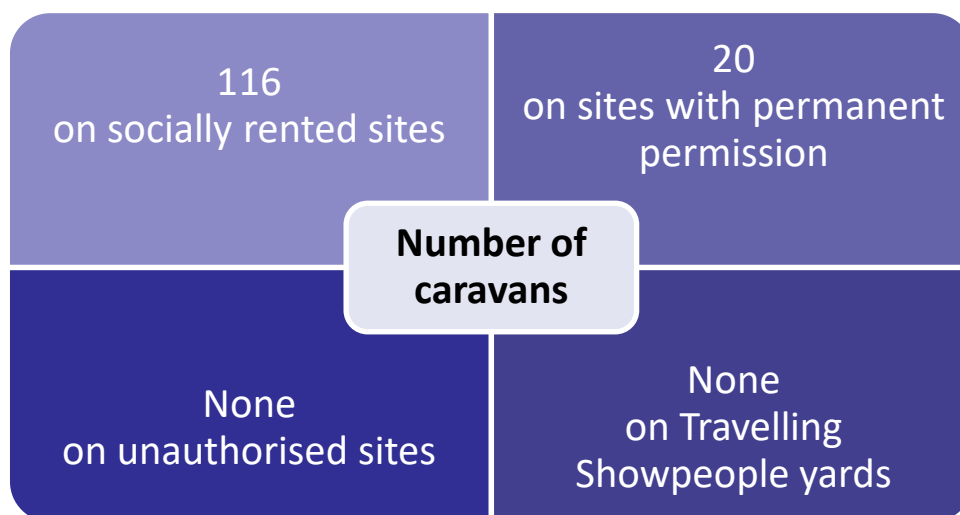
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<sup>10</sup> When away travelling Showpeople tend to stop off at the fairgrounds/events that they are working at.

<sup>11</sup> The Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count was renamed the Traveller Caravan Count due to the inclusion of information on Travelling Showpeople caravans in 2013.

in January and July of each year<sup>12</sup> and reported to MHCLG. This is a statistical count of the number of caravans on both authorised and unauthorised sites across England.

4.15 The most recent Traveller Caravan Count in July 2025 reported the following:



4.16 As this count is of caravans and not households, it makes it more difficult to interpret for a study such as this because it does not count pitches/plots or resident households. The count is merely a 'snapshot in time' conducted by the Local Authority on a specific day, and any unauthorised sites/yards or encampments which occur on other dates will not be recorded. Likewise, any caravans that are away from sites/yards on the day of the count will not be included.

4.17 As such it is not considered appropriate to use the outcomes from the Traveller Caravan Count in the calculation of current and future need as the information collected during the site/yard visits is seen as more robust and fit-for-purpose. However, the Caravan Count data has been used to support the identification of the need to provide for transit provision and this is set out later in this report.

## Sites and Yards in Darlington

4.18 Figure 3 below sets out the sites and yards in the area on the base date for the GTAA:

Figure 3: Total amount of provision in Darlington (September 2025)

Category	Sites/Yards	Pitches/Plots
<b>Gypsies and Travellers</b>		
Public sites	4	89
Private sites with permanent planning permission	19	62
Unauthorised sites	1	1
Public transit sites/pitches <sup>13</sup>	n/a	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>168</b>

4.19 See **Appendix B: Site and Yard List** for further details.

<sup>12</sup> Only in January for Travelling Showpeople.

<sup>13</sup> These transit pitches are located on one of the public sites and are not a separate transit site.

# 5. Stakeholder Engagement

## Introduction

- 5.1 ORS completed engagement with a range of stakeholders to complement the information gathered through interviews with members of the Travelling Community. This engagement took the form of telephone or Teams interviews.
- 5.2 The aim of these interviews is to provide an understanding of current provision and possible future need; short-term encampments; transit provision; and cross-border issues.
- 5.3 A total of 3 interviews were undertaken with Council Officers and other local stakeholders from the study area.
- 5.4 In order to explore issues relating to cross boundary working, ORS engaged with a Planning Officer from 3 neighbouring local authorities:
- » Durham Council
  - » North Yorkshire Council
  - » Stockton-On-Tees Council
- 5.5 Due to issues surrounding data protection, and in order to protect the anonymity of those who took part, this section presents a summary of the views expressed by interviewees and verbatim comments have not been used. The views expressed in this section of the report represent a balanced summary of the views expressed by stakeholders, and on the views of the individuals concerned, rather than the official policy of their Council or organisation.

## Views of Key Stakeholders and Council Officers

### Accommodation Needs

- 5.6 There is a belief amongst stakeholders that Darlington has taken limited steps to meet Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs since the previous GTAA. Bi-annual caravan counts continue to be carried out, and there is a proposed extension to the Honeypot Lane site.
- 5.7 Despite nominal pitch availability in the wider area, several neighbouring sites often have empty pitches that remain unused. This was attributed to the fact that some Traveller families are willing to live only on specific sites, meaning that certain vacancies are not practically suitable. Stakeholders noted closures of some local sites in recent years, contributing to overall pressure on provision.
- 5.8 Engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community was described as difficult. While certain community leaders are known and cooperative, wider community engagement is limited. A significant proportion of Travellers in the area are now in bricks and mortar accommodation, many of whom are settled and do not travel. Stakeholders reported no known overcrowding or concealed households.
- 5.9 Concerns were raised regarding instances where Gypsy families have purchased land and may not follow planning policy, instead breaking onto land without permission. Some sites have been associated with criminal activity, which creates additional challenges for local management and enforcement.

- 5.10 Provision for Travelling Showmen was not identified, and no recent activity to meet their needs was reported.

### Short-term Encampments and Transit Provision

- 5.11 Stakeholders identified several locations in Darlington where short-term unauthorised encampments occur, including Morrisons car park, a public park near a supermarket, and historic activity at South Park.
- 5.12 These encampments are linked to a range of factors, including seasonal movement, employment-related travel, and notably movements associated with Appleby Fair. Irish Travellers were described as particularly prevalent during the Appleby-related seasonal period, while Romani groups are more likely to stop for events.
- 5.13 Darlington's needs for transient Travellers are currently met by the transit pitches at Honey-pot Lane, although these pitches are selectively managed by certain families and may therefore be unsuitable for some Traveller groups. The transit element has been reduced from 24 pitches to 16, with the remaining pitches converted to permanent residential use. The transit site is said to be never full.
- 5.14 Overall, the interviewee did not believe that any further transit provision is required, stating that existing arrangements are adequate for the needs of the community.

### Cross Border Issues

- 5.15 Stakeholders reported no significant cross-border issues with neighbouring authorities regarding Gypsy and Traveller accommodation or movements.
- 5.16 Some ad hoc joint working takes place, including meetings during the management and planning of movements associated with Appleby Fair. These arrangements were described as working sufficiently well, and no changes or additional cross-border mechanisms were suggested as priorities.

### Future Priorities and Any Further Issues

- 5.17 Stakeholders did not identify any major future priorities or further issues specifically relating to Gypsies and Travellers or Travelling Showmen.

### Neighbouring Authorities

- 5.18 The following authorities responded to indicate no potential cross-border issues:

- » North Yorkshire Council
- » Stockton-on-Tees Council

- 5.19 The following authorities failed to respond after attempts to engage:

- » Durham Council

# 6. Survey of Travelling Communities

## Interviews with Travellers

- 6.1 One of the major components of this study was a detailed survey of the Gypsy and Traveller population living in the study area including efforts to engage with the bricks and mortar community.
- 6.2 At the base date for the GTAA, there were 4 public Gypsy and Traveller sites; 19 privately owned sites with permanent planning permission; 1 unauthorised site; no Travelling Showpeople yards; and 16 public transit pitches on one of the public sites. See **Appendix B: Site and Yard List** for further details.
- 6.3 In addition, it was possible to complete interviews with 4 groups of households living on the roadside in Darlington or in nearby areas who are in need for a permanent pitch.
- 6.4 Figure 4 below sets out the number of pitches, the number of interviews/proxy interviews that were completed or where an outcome was achieved, and any reasons why interviews were not able to be completed.

**Figure 4: Interviews/outcomes completed in Darlington**

Site/Yard Type	Pitches/ Plots	Interviews/ Outcomes	Notes
<b>Gypsies and Travellers</b>			
<b>Public Sites</b>			
Honeypot Lane Transit Conversion Area, Faverdale	7	4	3 x undeveloped/transit
Honeypot Lane, Faverdale	40	40	-
Rowan East, Eastbourne	20	20	-
Rowan West, Eastbourne	22	22	-
<b>Private Sites</b>			
Aycliffe Lane, Brafferton	3	3	-
Bridge View (North of Lea Close)	1	1	-
Bridgewood Stables, Brafferton	1	1	-
Hurworth View/The Paddock, Hurworth	2	2	-
Land east of A66, South Burden	1	0	1 x grazing land
Land east of Neasham Road	2	0	2 x no contact
Lime Lane/Aycliffe Lane, Brafferton	4	0	Site sold for housing
Little Beck, Hurworth	3	3	-
Lygon House, Hurworth	3	3	-
Mounsey, Hurworth	2	2	-
Oakwood, Hurworth	2	2	-
Oakwood Extension, Hurworth	2	0	2 x undeveloped
Oxmoor Nursery, Houghton Bank	3	2	1 x undeveloped
Snipe Lane Meadows, Hurworth	8	0	4 x no contact, 4 x undeveloped
Snipe Lane South, Hurworth	11	0	11 x no contact
Stables Blackwell Extension, Hurworth	2	0	2 x refusals
Stables Blackwell, Hurworth	8	0	6 x no contact, 2 x undeveloped
Walworth Lane South, Heighington	2	2	-

Walworth Road North East, Heighington	2	0	Vacant - just a field
<b>Roadside/In-Migration</b>			
Various	4	4	-
<b>Public Transit Sites/Pitches</b>			
Honeypot Lane, Faverdale	16	0	16 x transit pitches
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>111</b>	

# 7. Current and Future Pitch Provision

## Introduction

- 7.1 This section focuses on the pitch provision that is needed in the study area currently and to 2042/43. This includes both current unmet need and need which is likely to arise in the future<sup>14</sup>. This time period allows for robust forecasts of the requirements for future provision, based upon the evidence contained within this study and also secondary data sources.
- 7.2 We would note that this section is based upon a combination of the household interviews, planning records and stakeholder interviews. In many cases, the survey data is not used in isolation but instead is used to validate information from planning records or other sources.
- 7.3 This section also identifies whether there is a need for any transit provision.

## New Household Formation Rates

- 7.4 ORS prepared a Technical Note on Gypsy and Traveller Household Formation and Growth Rates in 2015 and updated it in 2020, and again in 2025. The main conclusions are set out here, and the full paper is in **Appendix D: Household Formation Rates**.
- 7.5 The Technical Note concludes that the growth in the national Gypsy and Traveller population may be as low as 1.25% per annum – much less than the 3.00% per annum often assumed, but still greater than in the settled community. Even using extreme and unrealistic assumptions, it is hard to find evidence for net Gypsy and Traveller population and household growth rates above 2.00% per annum.
- 7.6 In practice, the best available evidence supports a national net household growth rate of 1.50% per annum for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 7.7 This view has been supported by Planning Inspectors in a number of Decision Notices. The Inspector for an appeal in Doncaster that was issued in November 2016 (**Ref: APP/F4410/W/15/3133490**) where the agent acting on behalf of the appellant claimed that a rate closer to 3.00% should be used concluded:

*In assessing need account also needs to be taken of likely household growth over the coming years. In determining an annual household growth rate, the Council relies on the work of Opinions Research Services (ORS), part of Swansea University. ORS's research considers migration, population profiles, births & fertility rates, death rates, household size data and household dissolution rates to determine average household growth rates for gypsies and travellers. The findings indicate that the average annual growth rate is in the order of 1.50% but that a 2.50% figure could be used if local data suggest a relatively youthful population. As the Council has found a strong correlation between Doncaster's gypsy and traveller population age profile and the national picture, a 1.50% annual household growth rate has been used in its 2016 GTANA. Given the rigour of ORS's research and the Council's application of its findings to the local area I accept that a 1.50% figure is justified in the case of Doncaster.*

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 3 for details of the components of current and future need.

- 7.8 Another case was in relation to an appeal in Guildford that was issued in March 2018 (**Ref: APP/W/16/3165526**) where the agent acting on behalf of the appellant again claimed that a rate closer to 3.00% should be used. The Inspector concluded:

*There is significant debate about household formation rates and the need to meet future growth in the district. The obvious point to make is that this issue is likely to be debated at the local-plan examination. In my opinion, projecting growth rates is not an exact science and the debate demonstrates some divergence of opinion between the experts. Different methodologies could be applied producing a wide range of data. However, on the available evidence it seems to me that the figures used in the GTAA are probably appropriate given that they are derived by using local demographic evidence. In my opinion, the use of a national growth rate and its adaptation to suit local or regional variation, or the use of local base data to refine the figure, is a reasonable approach.*

- 7.9 As a result of these and other decisions, the ORS approach to new household formation is no longer regularly challenged so there have been no more recent decisions from Inspectors.

### Local Approach to New Household Formation Rates

- 7.10 This GTAA takes full account of the net local household growth rate per annum calculated on the basis of demographic evidence from the site surveys. The baseline includes all current authorised households, all households identified as being in current need (including concealed/doubled-up households, movement from bricks and mortar and those on waiting lists not currently living on a pitch or plot), as well as households living on tolerated unauthorised pitches or plots who are not included as current need. The assessments of future need also take account of modelling projections based on birth and death rates, household dissolution, and in-/out-migration.
- 7.11 Overall, the household growth rate used for the assessment of future needs is informed by local evidence. This local demographic evidence has been used to adjust the ORS national growth rate of 1.50% up or down based on the proportion of those aged under 18.
- 7.12 However, in certain circumstances where the numbers of households and children are low, or the population age structure cohorts are skewed by certain age groups, it is not appropriate to apply a percentage rate for new household formation. In these cases, a judgement is made on likely new household formation based on the age and gender of the children. This is based on the assumption that 50% of households likely to form will stay in the area. This is based on evidence from other GTAAs that ORS have completed across England and Wales.
- 7.13 The approach that has been applied in Darling for this GTAA is set out below:
- » For Gypsy and Traveller households that met the planning definition 34% of residents were aged under 18. Therefore, the ORS national rate of 1.50% has been reduced to 1.40%.
  - » The ORS national rate of 1.50% has been used to estimate growth for Gypsy and Traveller Undetermined Households.
- 7.14 It should also be noted that new household formation from younger children (aged 12 and under) has been calculated from year 6 of the GTAA period onwards. New household formation for years 0-5 of the GTAA period is from teenagers in need of a pitch/plot in the next 5 years who have been identified as components of need

in the household interviews, or through modelled need for Undetermined Households. This eliminates any double counting in the assessment of need.

## Breakdown by 5 Year Bands

- 7.15 In addition to tables which set out the overall need for Gypsies and Travellers, the overall need has also been broken down by 5-year bands as required by PPTS. The way that this is calculated is by including all current need (from unauthorised pitches/plots, pitches/plots with temporary planning permission, concealed and doubled-up households, 5-year need from teenage children, net movement from bricks and mortar, and in-migration/roadside need) in the first 5 years. The total net new household formation is then split across the remaining GTAA period.

## Household Planning Status

- 7.16 Figure 5 below sets out the planning status of households for the GTAA. It is important to note that this table records numbers of *households* and *not* the number of *pitches or plots*.

Figure 5: Planning status of households in Darlington

Status	Meet Planning Definition	Undetermined
<b>Gypsies and Travellers</b>		
Public Sites	100	0
Private Sites	23	25
Roadside/In-Migration	4	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>25</b>

- 7.17 Figure 5 above shows that for Gypsies and Travellers 127 households met the planning definition of a Traveller.
- 7.18 It was not possible to make contact with 25 Gypsy and Traveller households during the fieldwork period as households either refused to take part in an interview or were not present during the fieldwork period. These households are recorded as Undetermined for the purposes of the GTAA.

## Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers in Bricks and Mortar

- 7.19 Despite all of the efforts that were made it was not possible to identify and interview any households living in bricks and mortar.
- 7.20 Therefore, the GTAA found no local evidence in Darlington to suggest that there is a need for pitches from Traveller households living in bricks and mortar.
- 7.21 ORS have completed a large number of GTAAs and need from bricks and mortar households is regularly raised at Appeals and Examinations.
- 7.22 In response to this ORS are in the process of preparing a detailed Technical Note to set out evidence to demonstrate that the vast majority of Travellers who live in bricks and mortar do so through choice and have no wish or need to move to a site.

- 7.23 The emerging conclusions of the Technical Note suggest a maximum need from bricks and mortar of 2.5 households for each Local Planning Authority across England over a typical 15 year GTAA period, unless local evidence suggests otherwise. In Darlington there is no local evidence to suggest that there is any need.

## Migration/Roadside

- 7.24 The study also sought to identify any need from households who have been forced to move from sites/yards due to overcrowding and who are currently living on the roadside or on sites/yards in other local authorities – and who have strong family links with households in Darlington. These are referred to as roadside households or *displaced in-migration*.
- 7.25 Evidence drawn from stakeholder and household interviews has been considered alongside assessments of need that have been completed in other nearby local authorities. The household interviews identified 4 households living on roadside predominantly in Darlington with a need to move to a permanent pitch/plot in the area.
- 7.26 ORS have found no firm evidence from other local studies that have been completed recently of any other households wishing to move to Darlington. Therefore, apart from the 4 households set out above, net migration to the sum of zero has been assumed for the GTAA – which means that net pitch/plot requirements are driven by locally identifiable need rather than speculative modelling assumptions.
- 7.27 It is important to note that any applications for new sites/yards or additional pitches/plots as a result of in-migration should be seen as windfall need and should be dealt with by Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies.

## Public Sites

- 7.28 There are 4 public sites in Darlington with a total of 89 pitches. A review of the households currently on waiting lists for these sites identified that the majority currently in need of a pitch are already living on these sites. These households have therefore been included as components of need through concealed or doubled-up households and not as need arising from the waiting lists.
- 7.29 It is understood that there is currently an outline planning permission for a new public site in Darlington that will provide an additional 25 pitches (predominantly to meet need that has been identified in the GTAA). A full planning permission is expected to be submitted in September 2026 and the new site is expected to be operational by 2029. The Council are also considering providing a further 8 public pitches through an extension to one of the public sites on land that is owned by the Council.

## Gypsy and Traveller Needs

### Pitch Needs – Gypsies and Travellers that met the PPTS 2024 Planning Definition

7.30 Figure 6 below shows the identified needs. It sets out that analysis of the household interviews indicated that there is a total current need of 31 pitches for the GTAA period. This is broken down by year periods in Figure 7 following.

Figure 6: Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Darlington that met the Planning Definition

Gypsy & Traveller – Meeting Planning Definition	Pitches
<b>Supply of Pitches</b>	
Available supply from vacant public pitches	3
Available supply from pitches on new sites	25
Pitches vacated by households moving to bricks and mortar	0
Pitches vacated by households moving away from the study area	0
<b>Total Supply</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Current Need</b>	
Households on unauthorised developments	0
Households on pitches with temporary planning permission	0
Concealed households/Doubling-Up/Over-Crowding	16
5-year need from teenage children	10
Movement from bricks and mortar	0
In-Migration/Roadside	4
Households on waiting lists for public sites	0
<b>Total Current Need</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Future Need</b>	
New household formation	29
(Household base 137 and formation rate 1.40%)	
<b>Total Future Need</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Net Pitch Need = (Current and Future Need – Total Supply)</b>	<b>31</b>

Figure 7: Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in Darlington that met the Planning Definition by year periods

Year Period	Dates	Need
1 – 5	2025-29	2
6 – 10	2030-34	10
11 – 15	2035-39	12
16 – 18	2040-42	7
<b>0 – 18</b>	<b>2025-42</b>	<b>31</b>

## Pitch Needs – Undetermined Gypsies and Travellers

7.31 The assessment identified a need for up to 15 pitches for Undetermined Households. This is set out in Figure 8 and broken down by year periods in Figure 9 below:

**Figure 8: Need for undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households in Darlington**

Gypsy & Traveller – Undetermined	Pitches
<b>Supply of Pitches</b>	
Available supply from vacant public pitches	0
Available supply from pitches on new sites	0
Pitches vacated by households moving to bricks and mortar	0
Pitches vacated by households moving away from the study area	0
<b>Total Supply</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Current Need</b>	
Households on unauthorised developments	0
Households on pitches with temporary planning permission	0
Concealed households/Doubling-Up/Over-Crowding (modelled)	5
5-year need from teenage children (modelled)	2
Movement from bricks and mortar	0
In-Migration/Roadside	0
Households on waiting lists for public sites	0
<b>Total Current Need</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Future Need</b>	
New household formation	8
(Household base 32 and formation rate 1.50%)	
<b>Total Future Need</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Net Pitch Need = (Current and Future Need – Total Supply)</b>	<b>15</b>

**Figure 9: Need for undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households in Darlington by year periods**

Year Period	Dates	Need
1 – 5	2025-29	7
6 – 10	2030-34	3
11 – 15	2035-39	3
16 – 18	2040-42	2
<b>0 – 18</b>	<b>2025-42</b>	<b>15</b>

## Travelling Showpeople Needs

7.32 There were no Travelling Showpeople yards identified in Darlington so there is no current or future need for plots.

## Transit Requirements

- 7.33 When determining the potential need for transit provision the assessment has looked at data from the MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count, the outcomes of the stakeholder interviews, and local records on numbers of recorded encampments.

### MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count

- 7.34 Whilst it is considered to be a comprehensive national dataset on numbers of authorised and unauthorised caravans across England, it is acknowledged that the Traveller Caravan Count is a count of caravans and not households. It also does not record the reasons for unauthorised caravans. This makes it very difficult to interpret in relation to assessing future need because it does not count pitches/plots or resident households.
- 7.35 The count is also only a twice yearly (January and July) snapshot in time conducted by local authorities on a specific day, and any caravans on unauthorised sites/yards or encampments which occur on other dates are not recorded. Likewise, any caravans that are away from sites/yards on the day of the count are not included.
- 7.36 As such it is not considered appropriate to use the outcomes from the Traveller Caravan Count in the assessment of future transit provision. It does however provide valuable historic and trend data on whether there are instances of unauthorised caravans in local authority areas.
- 7.37 Data from the Traveller Caravan Count shows that there have been no unauthorised caravans recorded in the study area in recent years on land not owned by Travellers.

### Stakeholder Interviews and Local Data

- 7.38 Stakeholders identified several locations in Darlington where short-term unauthorised encampments occur, including Morrisons car park, a public park near a supermarket, and historic activity at South Park.
- 7.39 These encampments are linked to a range of factors, including seasonal movement, employment-related travel, and notably movements associated with Appleby Fair. Irish Travellers were described as particularly prevalent during the Appleby-related seasonal period, while Romani groups are more likely to stop for events.
- 7.40 Darlington's needs for transient Travellers are currently met by the transit pitches at Honeypot Lane, although these pitches are selectively managed by certain families and may therefore be unsuitable for some Traveller groups. The transit element has been reduced from 24 pitches to 16, with the remaining pitches converted to permanent residential use. The transit site is said to be never full.
- 7.41 Overall, the interviewee did not believe that any further transit provision is required, stating that existing arrangements are adequate for the needs of the community.

## 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 This GTAA provides a robust evidence base to enable the Council to assess the housing needs of the Travelling Community as well as complying with their requirements towards Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing Act 1985, the Housing and Planning Act 2016, Planning Practice Guidance, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2024, and the National Planning Policy Framework 2024. It also provides an evidence base which can be used to support Local Plan Policies.
- 8.2 Paragraph 4 in the PPTS sets out that *local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning.*
- 8.3 Paragraph 9 in the PPTS sets out that *local planning authorities should set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 and plot targets for travelling showpeople as defined in Annex 1 which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area.*
- 8.4 Paragraph 10 in the PPTS sets out that Local Planning Authorities should, in producing their Local Plan: *(a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets; (b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15.*
- 8.5 The PPTS in Annex 1 states that *For the purposes of this planning policy, "pitch" means a pitch on a "gypsy and traveller" site and "plot" means a pitch on a "travelling showpeople" site (often called a "yard").*
- 8.6 Paragraph 63 in the NPPF states that [emphasis added] *"Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; **travellers**<sup>27</sup>; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes."*
- 8.7 Footnote 27 to that paragraph states that *"Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers' housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document."*
- 8.8 Both the NPPF and PPTS refer to the provision of Travellers' *sites/yards* to meet needs, and the PPTS refers to setting *pitch/plot* targets. For ease, and consistency, this GTAA sets out the accommodation needs as needs for pitches/plots. In most cases, the need should be met through provision of a pitch/plot. However, in some circumstances the accommodation needs may be more appropriately met through provision of other *alternative* suitable accommodation (for example through additional touring caravans on sites and yards). So, in this GTAA any reference to *pitch/plot* means *pitch/plot or pitch/plot equivalent*.
- 8.9 This GTAA provides evidence of accommodation needs in line with both the PPTS and NPPF requirements. This evidence will help to inform the Council's policies in their emerging Local Plan including the setting of local pitch/plot targets and the allocation of sites/yards to meet identified accommodation needs.
- 8.10 ORS recommend that Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan Policies should give consideration to addressing need from households that meet the 2024 PPTS planning definition through the

allocation of new pitches or plots – or equivalents; through the intensification or expansion of the existing sites and yards where need has been identified; and through consideration of granting planning permission for any temporary and unauthorised sites or yards where this is felt to be appropriate in relation to relevant Development Management Policies.

- 8.11 The Council should also put in place a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy (as suggested in Paragraph 11 in the PPTS) to manage the need from Undetermined Households, as well as to deal with any potential windfall applications, potential need from in-migration, or any need arising from bricks and mortar.

## Gypsies and Travellers

- 8.12 For the GTAA period 2025/26 to 2042/43 there is a need for:
- » 31 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that meet the 2024 PPTS planning definition.
  - » 15 pitches for Undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households.
- 8.13 Taking into consideration all of the elements of need that have been assessed in this GTAA, together with the assumptions on need from Undetermined Households, Figure 10 below sets out the total number of pitches that will need to be addressed, broken down by households that meet the planning definition and Undetermined Households, across year bands throughout the plan period.
- 8.14 Need from households that meet the planning definition will need to be addressed through a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Policy through a combination of site/pitch allocations and through a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy; and need from Undetermined Households will have to be addressed through a Criteria-Based Local Plan Policy.

Figure 10: Total Pitch Need for Gypsy and Traveller Households

Gypsies and Travellers	2025-29	2030-34	2035-39	2040-42	2025-42
Meet Planning Definition (Allocations)	2	10	12	7	31
Undetermined (Criteria-Based Policy)	7	3	3	2	15
TOTAL	9	13	15	9	46

## Recommendations – Gypsies and Travellers

1. **Pitch Content:** In general terms, need identified in a GTAA is seen as need for pitches. As set out in Chapter 4 of this report, the now withdrawn Government Guidance on [Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites](#) recommended that, as a general guide, an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, parking space for two vehicles, and a small garden area. This guidance relates primarily to the provision of pitches on public sites but can also be more broadly applied to the provision of pitches on private sites.
2. **Pitch Size:** Whilst there is no standard size for a Gypsy and Traveller pitch, there are some examples of guidance<sup>15</sup> at a local authority level that recommend average pitch sizes of between 320m<sup>2</sup> and 500m<sup>2</sup> but also suggest that a variety of pitch sizes – including small, medium and large pitches - can

<sup>15</sup> Leeds City Council: [Gypsy and Traveller Site Design Guide \(2020\)](#) and East Devon District Council: [Gypsy and Traveller Site Design and Layout Guidance \(2017\)](#).

enable different sized families to be accommodated on sites (equivalent to two, three and four-bedroom houses) and can contribute to affordability.

3. **Public Sites:** For need arising from public sites the Council will need to consider the expansion or intensification of these sites, or for new sites(s), as it is unlikely that this need could be addressed through the provision of pitches on new private sites. It is understood that there is currently an outline planning permission for a new public site in Darlington that will provide an additional 25 pitches. A full planning permission is expected to be submitted in September 2026 and the new site is expected to be operational by 2029. The Council are also considering providing a further 8 public pitches through an extension to one of the public sites on land that is owned by the Council. In addition, there are 16 public transit pitches on one of the public sites and the Council should consider whether some of this land could be used to provide permanent public pitches, alongside a reduced number of transit pitches.
4. **Private Sites:** For need arising from private sites the Council will need to consider the expansion or intensification of these sites, or to address need through new site/pitch allocations.
5. **Alternative Approaches (1):** The Council should also consider alternative approaches to dealing with need from single adults and from teenagers as it is unlikely that they will need a full pitch of their own in the short to medium term. This need could be addressed through permitting additional touring caravans on existing sites/pitches which are, generally, each equivalent to the provision of a pitch, as opposed to more formally set out pitches. These approaches could be explored through the completion of a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (see Recommendation 11 below).
6. **Alternative Approaches (2):** The second approach to consider is for private sites occupied by larger extended family groups. Again, sites like this may be able to meet the overall accommodation needs through a combination of shared static caravans, tourers and dayrooms on existing sites – as opposed to more formally set out sites with separate pitches. It is common for conditions in Decision Notices for Traveller sites to simply place limits on the numbers and types of caravans as opposed to placing limits on the number of pitches. These approaches could also be explored through the completion of a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (see Recommendation 11 below).
7. **Undetermined Need:** The Council will also need to carefully consider how to address any potential need from Undetermined Households; from households seeking to move to Darlington (immigration), or from households currently living in bricks and mortar who may wish to move to a site. In terms of Local Plan Policies, the Council should continue to use or put in place Criteria-Based Local Plan Policies as suggested in the PPTS. In addition, the Council should consider whether currently undeveloped pitches on undetermined sites that have planning permission can address all or a proportion of the current undetermined need.
8. **Future Need:** Future need from new household formation could be met through natural turnover of pitches over time.
9. **Monitoring:** The Council should continue to monitor any changes to the site baseline through new applications and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites to provide 5 years' worth of sites against locally set targets as required by the PPTS.

10. **Supporting Data:** Whilst the findings in this report are aggregated totals for the whole of Darlington due to data protection issues, the Council have more detailed data to enable an accurate review of Local Plan allocations to be made.
11. **Pitch Deliverability Assessment:** Finally, the Council should consider completing a Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) to explore in more detail the capacity of existing sites to accommodate additional pitches and/or caravans to meet identified needs. The PDA should take into account the findings of this assessment to inform emerging Local Plan policies and may be updated if appropriate.

## Recommendations - Transit Provision

1. **Overall Transit Provision:** There are currently 16 public transit pitches on one of the public sites in Darlington. It is considered that these are appropriate to meet current levels on transit need in the Borough. As such, it is not recommended that there is a need for any additional public transit provision in the area at this time<sup>16</sup>.
2. **Monitoring:** The situation relating to levels of unauthorised encampments should continue to be monitored. As well as information on the size and duration of the encampments, this monitoring should also seek to gather information from residents on the reasons for their stay in the local area; whether they have a permanent base or where they have travelled from; and whether they have any need or preference to settle permanently in the local area. This information should be collected as part of a welfare assessment (or similar).
3. **Review:** It is recommended that a review of the evidence base relating to unauthorised encampments, including the monitoring referred to above, should be undertaken on an annual basis. This will establish whether there is a need for investment in any new transit provision or emergency stopping places, or whether the current approach is preferable.
4. **Short-Term Approach:** In the short-term the Council should continue to use its current informal tolerated approach when dealing with unauthorised encampments and management-based approaches, such as negotiated stopping agreements, should continue to be considered.
5. **Management-Based Approaches:** The term 'negotiated stopping' is used to describe agreed short-term provision for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. It does not describe permanent 'built' transit sites but negotiated agreements which allow caravans to be sited on suitable specific pieces of ground for an agreed and limited period of time, with the provision of limited services such as water, waste disposal and toilets. Agreements are made between the Council and the (temporary) residents regarding expectations on both sides. See [www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk](http://www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk) for further information.
6. **Temporary Stopping Places:** Temporary stopping places can be made available at times of increased demand due to fairs or cultural celebrations that are attended by Gypsies and Travellers. A charge may be levied as determined by the local authority although they only need to provide basic facilities including: a cold-water supply; portable toilets; sewage disposal points; and refuse disposal facilities.

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<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 7 for further details.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Glossary of Terms / Acronyms Used

### Glossary

**Amenity block** meaning a building where basic plumbing amenities are provided. This could include a bath, a shower, a WC and a sink.

**Bricks and mortar** are used to describe mainstream housing.

**Caravan** is used to describe mobile living vehicle used by Gypsies and Travellers. Also referred to as trailers.

**Concealed household** is used to describe households living within other households, who are unable to set up separate family units.

**Doubling-Up** refers to there being more than the permitted number of caravans on a pitch or plot.

**Emergency Stopping Place** is a temporary site with limited facilities to be occupied by Gypsies and Travellers whilst they travel.

**Green Belt** refers to a land use designation used to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**Household Formation** is the process in which individuals form separate households. This is normally though adult children setting up their own household.

**In-migration** refers to movement of households into a region or community.

**Local Plans** are Local Authority spatial planning documents that can include specific policies and/or site allocations for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

**Out-migration** refers to the Movement from one region or community in order to settle in another.

**Pitch/plot** is an area of land on a site or development generally home to one household. Can be varying sizes and have varying caravan numbers. Pitches refer to Gypsy and Traveller sites and Plots to Travelling Showpeople yards.

**Private site** is an authorised site owned privately. This can be owner-occupied, rented or a mixture of owner-occupied and rented pitches.

**Site** refers to an area of land on which Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are accommodated in caravans, chalets, or vehicles. Can contain one or multiple pitches or plots.

**Social/Public/Council Site** is an authorised site owned by either the local authority or a Registered Housing Provider.

**Temporary planning permission** refers to a private site with planning permission for a fixed period of time.

**Tolerated site/yard** refers to long-term tolerated sites or yards where enforcement action is not expedient, and a certificate of lawful use would be granted if sought.

**Transit provision** refers to a site intended for short stays and containing a range of facilities. There is normally a limit on the length of time residents can stay.

**Unauthorised Development** refers to caravans on land owned by Gypsies and Travellers and without planning permission.

**Unauthorised Encampment** refers to caravans on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers and without planning permission.

**Waiting list** is a record held by the local authority or site managers of applications to live on a site.

**Yard** is a name often used by Travelling Showpeople to refer to a site.

## Acronyms and Initials

<b>B&amp;M</b>	Bricks & Mortar
<b>GTAA</b>	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
<b>LPA</b>	Local Planning Authority
<b>MHCLG</b>	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
<b>ORS</b>	Opinion Research Services
<b>PPG</b>	Planning Practice Guidance
<b>PPTS</b>	Planning Policy for Traveller Sites
<b>TSP</b>	Travelling Showpeople

## Appendix B: Site and Yard List

Site/Yard	Planning Status	Authorised	Unauthorised
<b>Gypsies and Travellers</b>			
Honeypot Lane Transit Conversion Area , Faverdale	Public	7	
Honeypot Lane, Faverdale	Public	40	
Rowan East, Eastbourne	Public	20	
Rowan West, Eastbourne	Public	22	
Aycliffe Lane, Brafferton	Private	3	
Bridge View (North of Lea Close)	Private	1	
Bridgewood Stables, Brafferton	Private	1	
Hurworth View/The Paddock, Hurworth	Private	2	
Land east of A66, South Burden	Private	1	
Land east of Neasham Road	Private	2	
Lime Lane/Aycliffe Lane, Brafferton	Private	4	
Little Beck, Hurworth	Private	3	
Lygon House, Hurworth	Private	3	
Mounsey, Hurworth	Private	2	
Oakwood, Hurworth	Private	2	
Oakwood Extension, Hurworth	Private	2	
Oxmoor Nursery, Houghton Bank	Private	3	
Snipe Lane Meadows, Hurworth	Private	8	
Snipe Lane South, Hurworth	Private	11	
Stables Blackwell Extension, Hurworth	Private	2	
Stables Blackwell, Hurworth	Private	8	
Walworth Lane South, Heighington	Private	2	
Walworth Road North East, Heighington	Private	2	
Honeypot Lane, Faverdale	Public Transit	16	
Swan House Roundabout	Unauthorised		1
<b>Total Pitches</b>		<b>167</b>	<b>1</b>

## Appendix C: Household Interview Questionnaire



### GYPSY, TRAVELLER & TRAVELLING SHOWMEN ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**Site/yard code**

**Pitch/plot no.**

**Pitch/plot location**

#### INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS:

This questionnaire should be used to record information about households that have been interviewed, either with a structured interview (where questions were asked as they are written on the questionnaire) or a semi-structured interview (where the information was gathered through discursive conversation).

Whilst not all households will be prepared to answer every question, it is important to record as much information as possible; but any information that can be provided will be used to inform the assessment. For all questions, you may prompt respondents with the available options as necessary. Please use the “Further Information and Notes” pages towards the end of the form to record any other details that could be relevant to the assessment.

If respondents provide information about other households either living on this site/yard or elsewhere, a separate Proxy Questionnaire should be used to record the information about each additional household.

#### INTERVIEWER: READ OUT

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is < > and I work for Opinion Research Services (ORS).

The Council is undertaking a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showmen accommodation needs assessment in this area. They have asked ORS to try and contact every household from the Travelling Community living in their area to make sure that the needs assessment is accurate.

This important survey collects information about your accommodation on this site/yard, your own needs and needs of other members of your household, and details about your travelling. The information that you provide will help the Council better understand the accommodation needs of the Travelling Community. It will make sure that needs are properly assessed based on accurate and up-to-date information, so that the needs of every household get counted. The interview should take no more than 20 minutes, and any information that you provide will be treated in strict confidence; so, I hope that you will take part.

#### INTERVIEWER: READ OUT IF NECESSARY

Only ORS will see your individual answers, the information will be kept secure and confidential and only anonymised data will be sent to the Council. Any information that you provide will be processed by ORS in line with the requirements of the UK Data Protection Act and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For more information, please go to [www.ors.org.uk/privacy](http://www.ors.org.uk/privacy)

If you would like to confirm my identity, you can contact ORS on Freephone 0800 078 9786. If you would like to confirm that ORS is a genuine research practice, you can contact the Market Research Society on Freephone 0800 975 9596.

## Your Current Accommodation

### Q1. Are you and your household...?

**INTERVIEWER: READ OUT. CROSS ALL THAT APPLY**

- Romany Gypsy
- Irish Traveller
- English Traveller
- Scottish Gypsy or Traveller
- Welsh Gypsy
- Travelling Showman
- New Traveller
- Non-Traveller
- Prefer not to say

### Q2a. How long have you lived on this site/yard?

- Less than 12 months
- 12 months but less than 2 years
- 2 years but less than 5 years
- 5 years or longer → GO TO QUESTION 3
- No answer

### Q2b. Where did you previously live?

### Q3a. Is this site/yard your permanent base?

- Yes → GO TO QUESTION 4
- No
- No answer

### Q3b. If not, where is your permanent base?

### Q4. Does your household own this site/yard, or do you rent your pitch/plot?

- Own the site/yard
- Privately rent the pitch/plot
- Public rent the pitch/plot
- Housing Association rent the pitch/plot
- No answer

### Q5a. Is this site/yard suitable for the needs of your household?

- Yes → GO TO QUESTION 6
- No
- No answer

### Q5b. Why do you feel that it isn't suitable?

**Q6a. Do you plan to move from this site/yard within the next five years?**

- Yes
- No → GO TO QUESTION 7
- No answer

**Q6b. Why do you plan to move?****Q6c. Where do you plan to live after you have moved?**

- Elsewhere in this council area
- Another council area *WRITE IN*

- No answer

**Q6d. Would you prefer to...?**

- Buy a site/yard or a private pitch/plot
- Rent on a private site/yard
- Rent on a public site
- Live in Bricks and Mortar
- No answer

## Travelling

**Q7a. Have you or any other members of your household ever travelled away from your permanent base?**

- Yes
- No → GO TO QUESTION 10
- No answer

**Q7b. How many trips has your household made over the last 12 months?****Q8. What are/were the reasons for travelling from your permanent base?**

- To work, including working/trading at fairs
- Visiting fairs, but not to work
- Visiting family or friends
- Holiday
- Other reasons
- No answer

***INTERVIEWER: PROBE FULLY AND PROVIDE FURTHER DETAILS BELOW***

*If travelling for work, write in profession or trade, including frequency and length of trips*

*If travelling for fairs or other reasons, confirm if this involved any elements of work, and record nature of work undertaken*

*Please write in and continue in Notes section as necessary*

**Q9. Where do you usually stay?**

***INTERVIEWER: CROSS ALL BOXES THAT APPLY***

- Council transit sites
- Private transit sites
- On the roadside
- With family or friends
- Other WRITE IN
- No answer

**Q10. What are the main reasons for your household not travelling anymore?**

***INTERVIEWER: CROSS ALL BOXES THAT APPLY***

- Settled now
- Children in school
- Ill health
- Old age
- Nowhere to stop
- No work opportunities
- Other reasons → PROVIDE DETAILS IN NOTES
- No answer

**Q11a. Do you or any other members of your household plan to travel in future?**

- Yes
- No → GO TO QUESTION 12
- No answer

**Q11b. What will be the reasons for travelling?**

***INTERVIEWER: CROSS ALL BOXES THAT APPLY***

- To work, including working/trading at fairs
- Visiting fairs, but not to work
- Visiting family or friends
- Holiday
- Other reasons
- No answer

## Household Details

**Q12. How many people are in your household, and how many separate families are there?  
Please count everyone that normally lives on this pitch/plot, including yourself.**

number of people

number of families

For each person in your household please answer the following questions

**Q13a. What is their relationship to you**

- Husband, wife or partner
- Son or daughter (inc. stepchildren)
- Brother or sister (inc. stepsiblings)
- Mother or father (inc. stepparents)
- Grandchild
- Grandparent
- Relation - other
- Unrelated

**Q13b. What is their gender**

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

**Q13c. What was their age last birthday**

**Q13d. Have they travelled away to work in the last 12 months**

- Yes
- No

**Q13e. Do they plan to travel away to work any time in the future**

- Yes
- No

*Repeat for each household member*

## Accommodation Needs

**Q14a. If anyone currently living with you needs their own separate accommodation, how many pitches/plots are needed for them now, and how many will be needed within the next five years?**

pitches/plots for adults needed now

pitches/plots for adults needed within 5 years

pitches/plots for 13–17-year-olds needed within 5 years

**Q14b. Would they want to stay on this site/yard?**

- Yes
- No – want to live elsewhere in this council area
- No – want to move to another council area
- No answer

**Q15. Do you have any children or other family that are not currently living with you who need their own separate accommodation?**

- Yes → PROVIDE DETAILS IN NOTES
- No
- No answer

**Q15b. How many pitches/plots would they need?**

**Q15c. Would they want to move to this site/yard?**

- Yes
- No – want to live elsewhere in this council area
- No – want to move to another council area
- No answer

**Q16. If separate accommodation was needed on this site/yard, would there be...?**

***INTERVIEWER: READ OUT. CROSS ONE BOX ONLY***

- Space available on the existing site/yard
- Potential to extend the boundary of the site/yard
- Need for space on another local site/yard
- No answer

**Q17a. Do you own or are you aware of any land that has potential for new pitches/plots?**

- Yes
- No → GO TO QUESTION 18
- No answer

**Q17b. Where is the land and who owns it?****Q18a. Do you have any family or friends, or know anyone from the Travelling Community currently living in Bricks and Mortar who we should contact for this study?**

- Yes
- No → GO TO FURTHER INFORMATION
- No answer

**Q18b. Can you provide contact details for them?**

***INTERVIEWER: IF DETAILS REFUSED, READ OUT***

***If you aren't able to provide their details, please ask them to call ORS on Freephone 0800 078 9786 to make sure that their needs are counted***

## Further Information and Notes

**Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about this site/yard, your travelling patterns and any future plans to travel, or the accommodation needs of you and your household?**

## Appendix D: Household Formation Rates

# **ORS Technical Note: Gypsy and Traveller Household Formation and Growth Rates**

**January 2025**



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Abstract and Conclusions

- 1.1 National and local household formation and growth rates are important components of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs), but until 2013 little detailed work had been done to assess their likely scale. ORS undertook work in 2013 to assess the likely rate of demographic growth for the Gypsy and Traveller population and concluded that the figure could be as low as 1.25% per annum, but that best available evidence supports a national net household growth rate of 1.50% per annum.
- 1.2 This analysis was produced as a separate document in 2013 and then updated in 2015 and 2020 in light of comments from academics, planning agents and local authorities.
- 1.3 This current document represents an update to our findings in 2020 to consider the impact of the data from the 2021 UK Census of Population. This shows little change from the 2011 Census, so there is no change in the overall conclusions that support a national net household growth rate of 1.50% per annum.

## Introduction

- 1.4 Compared with the general population, the relative youthfulness of many Gypsy and Traveller populations means that their birth rates are likely to generate higher-than-average population growth, and proportionately higher gross household formation rates.
- 1.5 However, whilst their gross rate of household growth might be high, Gypsy and Traveller communities' future accommodation needs are, in practice, affected by any reduction in the number of households due to dissolution and/or by movements in/out of the area and/or by transfers into other forms of housing.
- 1.6 Therefore, the net rate of household growth is the gross rate of formation minus any reductions in households due to such factors.

## 2. Modelling Population and Household Growth Rates

- 2.1 The basic equation for calculating the rate of Gypsy and Traveller population growth is relatively simple: start with the base population and then calculate the average increase/decrease by allowing for births, deaths, in-/out-migration, and household dissolution.
- 2.2 Nevertheless, deriving satisfactory estimates is difficult because the evidence is often tenuous – so, in this context in 2013, ORS modelled the growth of the national Gypsy and Traveller population based on the most likely birth and death rates. To do so, we supplemented the available national statistical sources with data derived from our own surveys.

### Migration Effects

- 2.3 Population growth is affected by national net migration and local migration (as Gypsies and Travellers move from one area to another). In terms of national migration, the population of Gypsies and Travellers is relatively fixed, with little international migration.
- 2.4 It is in principle possible for Irish Travellers (based in Ireland) to move to the UK, but there is no evidence of this happening to a significant extent and the vast majority of Irish Travellers were born in the UK or are long-term residents.

### Population Profile

- 2.5 The main source for the rate of Gypsy and Traveller population growth is the UK 2011 and 2021 Censuses. This is due to the ethnicity question in the 2011 Census having a new option included, 'Gypsy and Irish Traveller' was added as a specific category and this option was repeated in the 2021 Census.
- 2.6 Whilst non-response bias probably means that the size of the population was underestimated, the age profile the 2011 and 2021 Censuses provide is not necessarily distorted and matches the profile derived from ORS's extensive household surveys.
- 2.7 The 2011 Census gave a total population of 54,895 in England, whilst the 2021 Census shows a population of 67,690, which represents a 23% increase.
- 2.8 However, this is measuring a mixture of real population growth and greater compliance with the Census in 2021. In reality, the true population of Gypsies and Travellers in England is likely to be 200,000-250,000, so both numbers are just a sample of the overall population.
- 2.9 Comparing the 2011 and 2021 Census datasets, the share of the population aged under 16 years has fallen from 31.8% to 30.5%, whilst the share aged 65 years or more has risen from 3.7% to 4.9%. The older population is still likely to be an under-estimate, but the results are consistent with the pattern seen in almost all population in England of falling birth rates and rising life expectancy.

**Figure 1 – Age Profile for the Gypsy and Traveller Community in England 2011 and 2021 (Source: UK Census of Population 2011 and 2021)**

Age Group	People 2011	Cumulative % 2011	People 2021	Cumulative % 2021
Age 0 to 4	5,725	10.4	6,535	9.7
Age 5 to 7	3,219	16.3	3,947	15.5
Age 8 to 9	2,006	19.9	2,547	19.2
Age 10 to 14	5,431	29.8	6,404	28.7
Age 15	1,089	31.8	1,212	30.5
Age 16 to 17	2,145	35.7	2,383	34.0
Age 18 to 19	1,750	38.9	2,107	37.1
Age 20 to 24	4,464	47.1	5,074	44.6
Age 25 to 29	4,189	54.7	4,889	51.9
Age 30 to 34	3,833	61.7	5,189	59.5
Age 35 to 39	3,779	68.5	4,611	66.3
Age 40 to 44	3,828	75.5	4,386	72.8
Age 45 to 49	3,547	82.0	3,982	78.7
Age 50 to 54	2,811	87.1	3,875	84.4
Age 55 to 59	2,074	90.9	3,196	89.1
Age 60 to 64	1,758	94.1	2,423	92.7
Age 65 to 69	1,215	96.3	1,638	95.1
Age 70 to 74	905	97.9	1,432	97.3
Age 75 to 79	594	99.0	882	98.6
Age 80 to 84	303	99.6	552	99.4
Age 85 and over	230	100.0	426	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,895</b>		<b>67,690</b>	

## Birth and Fertility Rates

- <sup>2.10</sup> The table above provides a way of understanding the rate of population growth through births. The table shows that surviving children aged 0-4 years comprise 9.7% of the Gypsy and Traveller population – which means that, on average, 1.9% of the total population was born each year (over the last 5 years). The same estimate is confirmed if we consider that those aged 0-14 comprise 28.7% of the Gypsy and Traveller population – which also means that almost exactly 2% of the population was born each year.
- <sup>2.11</sup> The total fertility rate (TFR) for the whole UK population is just below 2 – which means that on average each woman can be expected to have just less than two children who reach adulthood.
- <sup>2.12</sup> ORS know of only one estimate of fertility rates of the UK Gypsy and Traveller community, in *‘Ethnic identity and inequalities in Britain: The dynamics of diversity’* by Dr Stephen Jivraj and Professor Ludi Simpson (published May 2015). The authors use the 2011 Census data to estimate the TFR for the Gypsy and Traveller community as 2.75.
- <sup>2.13</sup> ORS have used our own historic survey data to investigate the fertility rates of Gypsy and Traveller women. The ORS data shows that on average Gypsy and Traveller women aged 32 years have 2.5 children (but, because the children of mothers above this age point tend to leave home progressively, full TFR’s were not completed).

- <sup>2.14</sup> On this basis it is reasonable to infer an average of 3 children per woman during their lifetime, which is broadly consistent with the estimate of 2.75 children per woman derived from the 2011 Census. The 2021 Census data is fully consistent with these estimates, so no changes are required to the modelling, but the evidence that the TFR could be falling should be monitored over time.

## Death Rates

- <sup>2.15</sup> Although the above data implies an annual growth rate through births of about 2%, the death rate must also be considered. Whereas the average life expectancy across the whole population of the UK is currently just over 80 years, a Sheffield University study found that Gypsy and Traveller life expectancy is about 10-12 years less than average (Parry et al (2004) *'The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers: Report of Department of Health Inequalities in Health Research Initiative'*, University of Sheffield).
- <sup>2.16</sup> Therefore, our population growth modelling in 2013 ORS used a conservative estimate of average life expectancy as 72 years – which is entirely consistent with the lower-than-average number of Gypsies and Travellers aged over 70 years in the 2011 Census (and also in ORS's own survey data).
- <sup>2.17</sup> Again, this data is fully consistent with the 2021 Census, which may be showing slight increases in life expectancy, but not sufficient to be inconsistent with the 2013 modelling.

## Modelling Outputs

- <sup>2.18</sup> If a TFR of 3 and an average life expectancy of 72 years are assumed for Gypsies and Travellers, then the ORS modelling projects the population to increase by 66% over the next 40 years – implying a population compound growth rate of 1.25% per annum.
- <sup>2.19</sup> If we assume that Gypsy and Traveller life expectancy increases to 77 years by 2050, then the projected population growth rate rises to nearly 1.50% per annum. To generate an 'upper range' rate of population growth, ORS assumed an implausible TFR of 4 and an average life expectancy rising to 77 over the next 40 years – which then yields an 'upper range' growth rate of 1.90% per annum.
- <sup>2.20</sup> Given the data from the 2021 Census, the figure of 1.25% net population growth appears to be consistent with around 2% of the population being born each year and deaths accounting for around a 0.75% reduction in population.

## Household Growth

- <sup>2.21</sup> In addition to population growth influencing the number of households, the size of households also affects the number. Hence, population and household growth rates do not necessarily match directly, mainly due to the current tendency for people to live in smaller childless or single person households.
- <sup>2.22</sup> Because the Gypsy and Traveller population is relatively young and has many single parent households, a 1.25%-1.50% annual population growth could yield higher-than-average household growth rates, particularly if average household sizes fall or if younger-than-average households' form.
- <sup>2.23</sup> However, whilst there is evidence that Gypsy and Traveller households already form at an earlier age than in the general population, the scope for a more rapid rate of growth, through even earlier household formation, is limited.

- <sup>2.24</sup> Based on the 2011 and 2021 Census, the tables below compare the age of household representatives in all households in England with those in Gypsy and Traveller households – showing that the latter has many more household representatives aged under-25 years. In the general England population in 2021, 2.7% of household representatives are aged 16-24, compared with 7.4% in the Gypsy and Traveller population, which is consistent with ORS’s survey data.
- <sup>2.25</sup> Interestingly, in 2011, 8.7% of all Gypsy and Traveller households were aged under 25 years, but this has fallen to 7.4% in 2021. This is in line with a fall in the general population from 3.6% to 2.7%, which implies households are forming at an older age. This in turn would mean that any population growth would convert to a lower household growth as the growing population forms households at an older age.

**Figure 2 – Age of Head of Household in 2011 (Source: UK Census of Population 2011)**

Age of Household Representative	Households - England	% Households - England	Households – Gypsies and Travellers	% Households – Gypsies and Travellers
Age 24 and under	790,974	3.6%	1,698	8.7%
Age 25 to 34	3,158,258	14.3%	4,232	21.7%
Age 35 to 49	6,563,651	29.7%	6,899	35.5%
Age 50 to 64	5,828,761	26.4%	4,310	22.2%
Age 65 to 74	2,764,474	12.5%	1,473	7.6%
Age 75 to 84	2,097,807	9.5%	682	3.5%
Age 85 and over	859,443	3.9%	164	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,063,368</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,458</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 3 – Age of Head of Household in 2021 (Source: UK Census of Population 2021)**

Age of Household Representative	Households - England	% Households - England	Households – Gypsies and Travellers	% Households – Gypsies and Travellers
Age 24 and under	608,361	2.7%	1,537	7.4%
Age 25 to 34	3,067,607	13.7%	4,278	20.6%
Age 35 to 49	5,886,110	26.2%	6,790	32.8%
Age 50 to 64	6,470,425	28.8%	5,318	25.7%
Age 65 and over	6,427,165	28.6%	2,807	13.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,459,668</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,730</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>2.26</sup> The following tables shows that the proportion of single person Gypsy and Traveller households is not dissimilar to the wider population of England; but there are more lone parents and fewer couples without children, amongst Gypsies and Travellers children. This was the case in both 2011 and 2021.

**Figure 4 – Household Type in 2011 (Source: UK Census of Population 2011)**

Household Type	Households - England	% Households - England	Households – Gypsies and Travellers	% Households – Gypsies and Travellers
Single person	6,666,493	30.3%	5,741	29.5%
Couple with no dependent children	7,024,688	31.8%	3,167	16.3%
Couple with dependent children	4,266,670	19.3%	3,683	18.9%
Lone parent with dependent children	1,573,255	7.1%	3,949	20.3%
Lone parent: All children non-dependent	766,569	3.5%	795	4.1%
Other households	1,765,693	8.0%	2,123	10.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,063,368</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,458</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 5 – Household Type in 2021 (Source: UK Census of Population 2021)**

Household Type	Households - England	% Households - England	Households – Gypsies and Travellers	% Households – Gypsies and Travellers
Single person	6,964,704	30.3%	6,264	28.8%
Couple with no dependent children	7,806,819	34.0%	4,411	20.3%
Couple with dependent children	4,662,429	20.3%	4,500	20.7%
Lone parent with dependent children	1,773,926	7.7%	4,634	21.3%
Lone parent: All children non-dependent	1,058,017	4.6%	1,269	5.8%
Other households	725,107	3.2%	689	3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,991,002</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,767</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>2.27</sup> The key point, though, is that since 21% of Gypsy and Traveller households are lone parents with dependent children, and up to 30% are single persons, there is limited potential for further reductions in average household size to increase current household formation rates significantly – and there is no reason to think that earlier household formations or increasing divorce rates will in the medium-term affect household formation rates.

<sup>2.28</sup> Whilst there are differences with the general population, a 1.25%-1.50% per annum Gypsy and Traveller population growth rate is likely to lead to a household growth rate of 1.25%-1.50% per annum.

## 3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The best available evidence suggests that the net annual Gypsy and Traveller household growth rate across England is 1.50% per annum. This figure was originally derived from the 2011 UK Census of Population and ORS's own survey but is also fully consistent with the 2021 UK Census of Population.
- 3.2 However, whilst a national rate of 1.50% can be demonstrated, this should be adjusted accordingly to establish local rates based on the demographic breakdown of the population at a local authority level.
- 3.3 Evidence from previous GTAA studies completed by ORS suggest that locally derived rates can vary from 0.50% to 2.75% depending on the number of children aged under 18 in the local Traveller population.
- 3.4 In addition, in certain circumstances where the numbers of households and children are higher or lower than national data has identified, or the population age structure is skewed by certain age groups, it may not be appropriate to apply a percentage rate for new household formation.
- 3.5 In these cases, a judgement should be made on likely new household formation based on the age and gender of the children identified in local household interviews. This should be based on the assumption that 50% of households likely to form will stay in any given area and that 50% will pair up and move to another area, whilst still considering the impact of dissolution. This is based on evidence from over 170 GTAAAs that ORS have completed across England and Wales involving over 7,000 household interviews.