

# Client Group: Gypsies and Travellers

## Needs Analysis

(Refreshed December 2008)

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Warwickshire*



Two accommodation assessment needs surveys have been conducted simultaneously for the North and South of the County respectively. These surveys have captured useful information about the housing related support needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The surveys have evaluated not only the housing needs of this community but also health, education and well-being.

## **CURRENT POSITION WITHIN WARWICKSHIRE**

The estimate of need for housing in the next three to five years is 183 extra pitches in Warwickshire. This figure is based on current residents on public and private sites and the number of unauthorised encampments. Between January and July 2008 there were approximately 250 caravans involved on unauthorised encampments, of which a large proportion stated they would like to settle in Warwickshire or the surrounding area.

Although the exact number of gypsies and travellers within Warwickshire is difficult to quantify, recently, there have been a large number of unauthorised encampments. During the last month alone, there have been approximately 68 caravans which have had to be moved. As all public sites are full and none of the housing authorities have yet identified appropriate sites the large number of unauthorised encampments will continue until such time as sites are provided. This has a knock on effect for the gypsies and travellers as they are unable to obtain services which are provided by local authorities and has effected their health and well-being.

There are four authorised gypsy and traveller sites in Warwickshire. These are:

### **Alvecote**

Alvecote is situated in the north of the county and has seventeen plots. The site was refurbished in 2007 and has 13 plots occupied with the remaining 4 plots earmarked for travelling families.

### **Griff**

The Griff site is located on the eastern side of Nuneaton and currently has twenty-one plots. The County Council has allocated £2,000,000 towards the rebuild of the site and the Gypsy and Traveller Service has bid for a further £1,076,000. This will increase the number of plots on site from 21 to 25. At present eight of the utility buildings have been condemned and the remainder are in a poor state of repair, with a number having no access to toilets or bathing facilities.

### **Pathlow**

Pathlow is situated near Stratford-upon-Avon and is managed by Stratford-on-Avon District Council. It has recently been successful in obtaining a refurbishment grant to improve the site, which currently has thirty plots, of which some are double-sized, so it can accommodate up to fifty caravans.

### **Woodside**

The Woodside site is located next to Ryton-on-Dunsmore and currently has 48 pitches. The site is currently under joint ownership between private occupants and Rugby Borough Council. Rugby have been successful in obtaining a grant to build an additional 12 plots in the centre of the site.

Table 2; Number of Gypsy and Traveller children attending a LEA school, by Ethnicity, Autumn Term 2007

SCHOOL	Gypsy	Roma	Irish Traveller	Circus	Bargee	TOTAL
<b>NURSERY</b>	5					<b>5</b>
<b>PRIMARY</b>						
Abbey CE Infant	1					<b>1</b>
All Saints CE Primary	9		2			<b>11</b>
Arden Forest Infants	5					<b>5</b>
Bidford on Avon Primary	15					<b>15</b>
Bishopton Junior & Infant	17					<b>17</b>
Henley in Arden Junior & Infant				1		<b>1</b>
Ilmington CE Primary				2		<b>2</b>
Newton Regis Primary	6					<b>6</b>
Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Infant			1			<b>1</b>
Princethorpe RC Junior & Infant			2			<b>2</b>
Shottery St Andrews CE Primary				1		<b>1</b>
Snitterfield Primary	1					<b>1</b>
St Anne's Catholic Primary			3			<b>3</b>
St Giles Junior			3			<b>3</b>
St James CE Junior	5					<b>5</b>
St Josephs Catholic Junior			2			<b>2</b>
St Margarets CE Primary			6			<b>6</b>
St Marys Catholic	2					<b>2</b>
St Michaels CE Primary	2					<b>2</b>
Tanworth in Arden CE Primary	1					<b>1</b>
Thomas Jolyffe Primary	1					<b>1</b>
Wheelwright Lane Primary	3					<b>3</b>
Wilmcote CE Primary	8					<b>8</b>
Wolvey CE Primary	55		3			<b>58</b>
<b>SECONDARY</b>						
Alcester High School	2					<b>2</b>
Ash Green	2					<b>2</b>
Campion					3	<b>3</b>
George Eliot	3					<b>3</b>
Henley in Arden High School				3		<b>3</b>
St Benedicts Catholic High	1					<b>1</b>
Stratford upon Avon High	5					<b>5</b>
Studley High	1					<b>1</b>
<b>SPECIAL</b>						
Oakwood Primary			1			<b>1</b>
Welcombe Hills	1					<b>1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>184</b>

Table 2 provides a breakdown of those children classified as a Gypsy or Traveller, by the school they attended during the Autumn 2007 school term and their ethnic group. Approximately 85% were of primary school age and 82% were of the ethnic group Gypsy.

## **GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT**

Recent legislation and guidance from the government has indicated a commitment to taking steps to resolve some of the long standing accommodation issues for members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. This legislation has an overarching aim of ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities have equal access to decent and appropriate accommodation options akin to each and every other member of society. As a result, Warwickshire along with other local authorities carried out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).

Warwickshire GTAA was split over the two housing market areas, the northern area which covered Southern Staffordshire and Northern Warwickshire area (North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth and Rugby) and the southern area which covered parts of Worcestershire and South Warwickshire (Stratford upon Avon and Warwick) . The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit at the University of Birmingham for the north and Rupert Scott of Affordable Housing in the south. The study was greatly aided by research support and expertise from members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The study was managed by Steering Groups composed of members representing the Partner Authorities.

The assessment was undertaken by conducting:

- A review of available literature, data and secondary sources;
- A detailed questionnaire completed by housing and planning officers;
- Consultations with key stakeholders; and
- Interviews with Gypsies and Travellers from a range of tenures and community groups.

### **Background**

Following the Housing Act 2004, local authorities have been preparing to develop and implement strategies to respond to the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities living in their areas as part of their wider housing strategies and the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS). Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) are designed to provide the evidence needed to inform these strategies. However, as well as presenting evidence and information on accommodation needs at an immediate local level, the evidence collected and analysis produced has a wider regional role. The assessment of accommodation need and pitch requirements are also to be fed into the Regional Planning Body (RPB), in this case the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy for each Local Planning Authority (LPA) in light of the GTAAs conducted and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region is taken. The Local Planning Authority's Development Planning Document (DPD) then identifies specific sites to match pitch numbers from the RSS.

## **Main Findings**

### **Local Gypsies and Travellers and accommodation provision**

There is no one source of information about the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in Warwickshire. Our best estimate is that there are at least 1,412 local Gypsies and Travellers

There are 3 **socially rented sites** in Warwickshire (North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Stratford) together providing 69 pitches. Woodside site which is due to be completed in September 2008 will provide another 12 pitches. All residents have access to amenity blocks, WC and a water supply.

There are an additional **32 authorised private sites** in the Study Area together providing an estimated 133 pitches (this includes new approved sites, which are not included in the table below). The provision of authorised pitches is scattered throughout all local authorities with particular concentrations in Stratford, Rugby and Nuneaton and Bedworth. It is estimated that around two-thirds of these pitches (68%) are rented. Most respondents on private sites reported access to WC, postal service, rubbish collection, a water supply and an electric supply. Respondents on private sites had, on average, 1.3 caravans per household with the vast majority commenting that this gave them enough space. Respondents on private sites were generally much more satisfied with their accommodation than households on socially rented sites.

There are 7 unauthorised developments (land owned by Gypsies and Travellers but developed without planning permission) within the Study Area. These developments could accommodate approximately 39 separate households. Due to their undeveloped nature access to facilities on these sites is poorer than on authorised sites. Most households that were spoken to as part of the assessment had access to WC, rubbish collection, water and a postal service. Most households also had access to an amenity block. The tenure arrangements on these sites are unclear.

There is 1 **Travelling show people** yard which is privately owned and is used for residential purposes. It was clear that the yard required regularisation and permanency. There was also a need for more accommodation for travelling showpeople in the Study Area.

### **Unauthorised encampments**

Since January 2008 we have recorded 124 caravans on unauthorised encampments (on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers). Records kept by the local authorities show that the Study Area experienced around 67 encampments over the previous full calendar year (2007) The average number of caravans owned by households on unauthorised encampments was 1.3 with around 3.5 people living in each caravan. Most households felt that they had enough living space for their needs although for some affordability provided a major barrier to achieving more space. Access to facilities is restricted for households on unauthorised encampments.

### **Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar housing**

Local authorities are now making specific reference to Gypsies and Travellers in local authority housing strategies. The inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in homelessness and BME housing strategies is less consistent. No local authority was able to quantify the number of Gypsies and Travellers in social or private bricks and mortar housing. From information gathered via Warwickshire County Council and from fieldwork experience it is estimated that

there are at least 47 families in housing within the Study Area – however, it is acknowledged that this is probably a significant underestimate.

The main reasons for moving into bricks and mortar was for family reasons, health, education and a lack of sites were all given as major reasons which stimulated a move into housing.

### **Characteristics of local Gypsies and Travellers**

The survey of Gypsies and Travellers identified some of the important characteristics of the local population.

- Household size is significantly larger than in the settled/non-Traveller population at 3.6 persons across the whole sample
- A significant minority of the sample (12%) are households over 60 years of age.
- Young families are the predominant household type in the Study Area as a whole. However, there are a significant number of single households on the socially rented sites.
- The majority of Gypsies and Travellers in trailers and in housing can be seen to belong, in some way, to the Study Area.
- The majority of respondents, nearly three-quarters, felt they were 'local' to the area they were residing in. 'Family connections' was the main reason given when respondents were asked why they were living where they were.
- The local population includes diverse ethnic groups. Romany Gypsy is the largest ethnic group (68%), followed by Irish Travellers (18%), with much smaller numbers of others who described themselves as Showpeople, Welsh Gypsy or Traveller.
- A third of school age children do not regularly attend school or receive home education. Children on unauthorised encampments and socially rented sites had the poorest attendance levels.
- The Gypsy and Traveller population is largely sedentary. However, around half of settled or authorised households still travelled seasonally – with some travelling more often than this. Feeling settled and poor health were the main reasons that were cited for not travelling.
- Of those households who still travelled, around a quarter of respondents intended to engage in quite local travelling (within the local area, Study Area or West Midland region) with a third planning to travel to other parts of the UK.
- Self-employment was a major source of income for respondents with the type of work people engaged including: gardening/tree work, carpet related trades, UPVC and guttering and scrap.

### **Gypsies and Travellers and housing-related support**

There were no Supporting People funded services specifically for Gypsies and Travellers at the time of the assessment.

The kind of housing-related services Gypsies and Travellers expressed an interest in receiving assistance with included: accessing health care, claiming benefits, harassment issues, finding accommodation, support with planning and accessing legal services.

Over a third of respondents felt that they had experienced some form of harassment or discrimination as a result of being a Gypsy or a Traveller.

## Accommodation preferences and aspirations

All households were asked whether there was anyone living with them who was likely to want their own accommodation over the next 5 years. Overall, 20 households reported that there was, which equated to 24 individuals who will require their own accommodation by 2012.

There was support for the creation of additional long-stay residential sites within the Study Area with a quarter of respondents interested in moving to a new residential site – this included households who were currently accommodated on sites within the Study Area. Respondents voiced a preference for residential sites with pitch capacities of between 10-15 pitches.

Nearly a fifth of respondents wanted to see the development of more transit/short-stay sites in the Study Area. Interest in such sites was shown from households from all accommodation types. For households on authorised/settled accommodation the creation of more authorised short stay accommodation would enable an increase in family visits and help to maintain the tradition of travelling. Such sites should be around 10 pitches in size with a large number of people expecting to use the site for between 1-4 weeks.

Respondents were asked to comment on a range of differing accommodation types in order to ascertain their preferences. The clear preference was for a small private site which they/ their family owned, followed by travelling around on authorised transit sites, followed by a site owned by the local authority. Living in a local authority or RSL house was the least favoured option.

## Accommodation need and supply

Nationally, there are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. The supply of additional authorised accommodation has slowed since 1994, but the size of the population of Gypsies and Travellers does not appear to have been affected to a great extent. Instead, the way in which Gypsies and Travellers live has changed with an increase in unauthorised accommodation, innovative house dwelling arrangements (living in trailers in the grounds of houses), overcrowding on sites and overcrowding within accommodation in accommodation units (trailers, houses, Chalets, etc).

**Table 3. Residential accommodation need arising from existing district/borough level Gypsy and Traveller populations**

	North Warwickshire	Nuneaton & Bedworth	Rugby	Warwick	Stratford	Total
Current authorised residential provision	24	36	66	5	41	172
Additional residential need 2007 - 2012	12	20	46	11	34*	123 *(143)
Additional transit need 2007-2012	5	5	5	15	10	40

\* An additional 20 pitches has been identified for the group at Darlingscott crossroads near Shipston on Stour.

The 'models' for assessing the requirement for additional residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, have developed significantly over the past few years. The calculation used in Table 3 above is an adaptation of the example provided by the CLG. The calculation for years 1-5 (2007-2012) takes account of need arising from the following indicators: expiry of temporary planning permissions, household growth, need from unauthorised developments, movement between sites and housing, need from closing sites, and need from households on unauthorised encampments. On the supply side the calculation takes account of pitch vacancies on socially rented sites, unused pitches, and known/planned developments of sites/pitches. These calculations are estimates based on information drawn from local authority information, knowledge of key stakeholders, survey findings and assumptions based on the professional experience of the study team.

Additional requirements beyond 2012 are based on estimated household growth. This is assumed to be a 3% increase each year following commonly accepted assumptions as to the growth of the population.

Transit requirements (2007-2012) are calculated by the average number of households on unauthorised encampments seeking a transit/short-stay pitch in the area; an allowance for vacancies is included in order to manage their operation effectively. No further transit provision is estimated to be required beyond 2012 on the assumption that the level of travelling will not increase in the foreseeable future and other surrounding local authorities will also have developed appropriate transit options.

Requirements for the additional residential provision for Travelling Showpeople are estimated on the basis of survey findings and local authority information.

Table 3 summarises estimated requirements. The split between local authorities is indicative only and based on evidence of '**need where it arises**' and this reflects the current uneven distribution of the Gypsy and Traveller population. An additional 183 pitches has been identified as the required need within Warwickshire including 40 pitches for transit sites throughout the county.

## **Case Studies**

The studies described below both refer to service users being assisted by the new Supporting People funded Floating Support Service for Gypsies and Travellers. Both studies highlight how this group of people have very limited knowledge of how to get assistance from the Council, and their particular perceptions of public and local authorities, leading to their feelings of worthlessness and insignificance. The view of the Gypsies & Travellers community is that the Local Authority does not do enough for them, therefore, more needs to be done to improve relationships with one of the most marginalised groups in society.

**Mrs A** - Mrs A is 57 years old. She has limited reading and writing skills and she finds it difficult to ask for help as she does not want other people to know her business. Mrs A is a carer for her father-in-law and provides all personal care for him. The caravan in which Mrs A's father-in-law lives is unsuitable for his needs. Mrs A needs to carry him on her back to the outside bathroom and toilet facilities. This involves walking up and down a few steps, which makes it not only difficult, but also dangerous for both of them. After discussing different options Mrs A decided that a mobile home with built in shower and toilet facilities would make the provision of care for her father-in-law much easier. It would also enable him to stay close to his family. Gypsy and Traveller Services then supported Mrs A with hire of a suitable mobile home.

**Mrs B** – Mrs B is a 38 year old mother of two children and a full-time carer for her disabled husband. She approached Gypsy and Traveller Service for help because she was

dissatisfied with the care package her husband was receiving. Mrs B cannot read or write and felt unable to complain about her husband's care. Gypsy and traveller service helped support Mrs B by helping her to write a letter of complaint.

After an initial assessment it became apparent that Mrs B was not claiming the correct benefits. She did not know what benefits she could claim or how to start a claim. The Gypsy and Traveller service put her in touch with the Benefit Enquiry Line and Mrs B found out what benefits she could claim. The Gypsy and Traveller service further supported her with making a new claim. To complete the claim, Mrs B had to attend a meeting at a local job centre but did not feel comfortable to do so on her own. However with the help from her support worker she was able to attend her appointment.

### **Assumptions of Need**

- Support for roadside families moving onto sites
- Support required for moving into and out of accommodation
- None of the existing travellers sites have a community-meeting place. This would be of benefit to the travellers to arrange their own meetings and functions.
- Gypsies and Travellers living in permanent "bricks and mortar" housing will often need tenancy support.

### **Supporting People Client Database Information**

There were no new Gypsy and Traveller service users during 2007/08. The new Floating Support service specifically for Gypsies and Travellers commenced operations in June 2008 and no new client data is currently available.

### **QUALITATIVE INFORMATION**

#### **Implications of Service Unavailability:**

- Travellers are forced to live 'illegally' on small sites, often without proper facilities and in environmentally harmful situations (ie by refuge sites, industrial areas, under motorway flyovers etc).
- Research has suggested there is a possible link between the poor health of some travellers and the poor conditions of the sites they occupy.
- High levels of illiteracy among the traveller communities are partly a consequence of frequent evictions and resultant school changes.

#### **Specific Omissions in Provision:**

- The new Supporting People funded Floating Support Service for Gypsies and Travellers commenced operations on 23 June 2008.
- It is too early to judge the extent to which the new service meets the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the county. A review will be conducted in 2009 to assess progress and to consider what further actions are required.

## **Feedback from Supporting People Big Event and the Partnership Day**

- At the Supporting People Event, of the total money allocated to the client groups by the event attendees using the 'post box' exercise, 0.6% was received by the 'Gypsies/Travellers' client group.
- At the Partnership Day, using the same 'post box' exercise, 'Gypsies/Travellers' received 2% of the total money allocated to the client groups.

## **Strategic Context**

- Evidence suggests that the needs of Gypsy/Travellers are not being met through current plans and provision. A strategy on accommodation should be linked to wider service areas such as health and education, and to a communication strategy.
- Race Relations Responsibilities: Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised ethnic groups in the Race Relations Act (1976), identified as having a shared culture, language and beliefs. This requires public authorities to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups and promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.
- Housing Act 2004 and Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 imposed the duty to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in an area, and to include specific site and criteria in Local Development Frameworks.