

# Tyne and Wear Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment

## Final Report

**Philip Brown, Lisa Hunt and Jenna Condie**  
Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit  
University of Salford

**Pat Niner**  
Centre for Urban and Regional Studies  
University of Birmingham

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## About the Authors

Philip Brown and Lisa Hunt are Research Fellows and in the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford. Jenna Condie is a Research Assistant within SHUSU.

Pat Niner is a Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) at the University of Birmingham

The Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit is a dedicated multi-disciplinary research and consultancy unit providing a range of services relating to housing and urban management to public and private sector clients. The Unit brings together researchers drawn from a range of disciplines including: social policy, housing management, urban geography, environmental management, psychology, social care and social work.

## Study Team

<b>Core team members:</b>	<b>Community Interviewers:</b>
Dr Philip Brown Dr Lisa Hunt Jenna Condie Pat Niner	Valerie Moody John Coffey

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This report is based on research undertaken by the study team and the analysis and comment thereafter do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the research commissioning partnership, or any participating stakeholders and agencies. The authors take responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions in the report.

# Executive Summary

## The Study

1. 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 and Travelling Showpeople 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, Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) have been undertaken across the UK, as local authorities respond to these new obligations and requirements.
2. This research and report was commissioned by the Tyne and Wear Housing Partnership in November 2007. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit at the University of Salford, assisted by staff at the Centre for Urban and Regional Research at the University of Birmingham. The study was greatly aided by research support and expertise from members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The study was managed by the Partner Authorities and other key stakeholders including representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.
3. The assessment was undertaken by conducting:
  - a review of available literature, data and secondary sources;
  - a detailed questionnaire completed by housing, planning and environmental health officers;
  - consultations with key stakeholders; and
  - a total of 139 interviews with Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople from a range of tenures and community groups.

## Background

4. Following the Housing Act 2004 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 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, planning policies and the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) and Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). 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 North East Assembly (NEA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for local planning authorities (LPAs) in light of the GTAA's produced, and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region is taken. The local planning authority's Local Development Framework (LDF), composed of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), then identifies specific sites to match pitch numbers from the RSS or outlines criteria against which future sites can be assessed.

## **Main Findings**

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

5. There is no one source of information about the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in the Study Area. Our best estimate is that there are at least 983 local Gypsies and Travellers.
6. Since the closure of a socially rented site in Newcastle there is now **1 socially rented site** in the Study Area, situated in Gateshead. This site provides 14 double pitches which accommodates 58 individuals. All residents have access to amenity blocks, WC, a water supply, showers and space for cooking and laundry. All residents had touring caravans as opposed to static caravans or chalets. The majority of residents interviewed thought the facilities were good and all viewed the management of the site in a positive light.
7. There is **1 authorised private site** in the Study Area situated in South Tyneside. This site currently has temporary planning permission and is currently occupied by 7 households on 7 pitches. The site has permission for 11 pitches in total. Residents on this site were very happy with the location of their site but currently had problems accessing a range of facilities such as water.
8. There were no **unauthorised developments** (land owned by Gypsies and Travellers but developed without planning permission) within the Study Area as such, although a number of people who were occupying either the driveways or gardens of friends or family in bricks and mortar housing were found. Such households could be seen as a version of unauthorised development. Some of these households were looking for a place to stay in the Study Area; others were staying in the area en route to elsewhere.
9. There is a good deal of provision for **Travelling Showpeople** in the Study Area. There are 3 yards in Sunderland which accommodate approximately 127 households. There is 1 yard in South Tyneside that accommodates 25 households. The Sunderland yards are all in private ownership and are either owner-occupied or privately rented. The site in South Tyneside is provided by the local authority and leased on the basis that pitch occupiers engage in work on the adjacent South Shields Amusement Park. A total of 54 interviews were conducted with yard-based Travelling Showpeople. The majority of people provided positive comments about their accommodation; some did express

concerns about health and safety. In turn, a number of people were concerned about potential overcrowding/underprovision of sites as members of the families got older.

### **Unauthorised encampments**

10. The Caravan Count in January 2007 recorded 0 caravans on unauthorised encampments (on land not owned by Gypsies and Travellers). The Caravan Count however has been criticised for its inability to provide an accurate picture of unauthorised camping. Records kept by the local authorities show that the Study Area experienced around 52 encampments over the previous full calendar year (2007). The average encampment size was just over 7 caravans. Most encampments stayed for a relatively short period of time with the average duration being 6 days. Most of the encampments occurred in Gateshead and Sunderland.
11. A total of 21 interviews were carried out with people on unauthorised encampments. The average number of caravans owned by households on unauthorised encampments was 1.4 with around 3 people living in each caravan. Most households felt that they had enough living space for their needs apart from one household who required more/bigger trailers.
12. Access to facilities was largely restricted for households on unauthorised encampments with respondents commenting that they obtain water from nearby garages and used the toilets in local supermarkets. Just a fifth of respondents had access to some form of waste disposal/collection.
13. Three respondents on unauthorised encampments had a base elsewhere. All three respondents lived in either London or in Northern Ireland. Two respondents owned a house and the other lived on a private transit site. This highlights the complex nature of unauthorised camping and the people who tend to do so.

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

14. All authorities make specific reference to Gypsies and Travellers in local authority housing strategies. No local authority or stakeholder was able to estimate the size of the 'housed' Gypsy and Traveller population in the Study Area. For the purposes of this assessment the housed population is estimated to be at least 100 households across the Study Area – however, it is acknowledged that this is probably a significant underestimate.
15. A total of 50 households were interviewed who were living in bricks and mortar housing across the Study Area. Around a third of the Gypsies and Travellers interviewed were owner-occupiers; the remaining households were tenants of some kind (socially rented or private). Around seven in ten households still retained a trailer. The majority of respondents viewed their house positively and had access to all the basic facilities that we enquired about. Overall, most of the respondents had lived in their accommodation for a number of years. Around a fifth of respondents were considering leaving

their house to move back into trailer-based accommodation in the near future. The remainder thought they would either remain in the house indefinitely or reported that they did not know what they would do.

16. A fifth of all respondents had lived in a house at some point in the past. Around two-thirds of people viewed living in a house as a positive experience.

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

17. The survey of Gypsies and Travellers identified some of the important characteristics of the local population.
18. Household size is significantly larger than in the settled/non-Traveller population at 3.9 persons across the whole sample.
19. A significant minority of the sample (20%) were households over 60 years of age.
20. Young families are the predominant household type in the Study Area as a whole.
21. The majority of Gypsies and Travellers in trailers and in housing can be seen to belong, in some way, to the Study Area.
22. 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.
23. The local population includes diverse ethnic groups. Travelling Showpeople was the largest group (39%), followed by Scottish Travellers (28%), then by Irish Travellers (19%) with smaller numbers of others who described themselves as Romany Gypsy (11%) and Traveller (non-specified) (3%) or New Traveller (1%).
24. Overall 94% of school-age children regularly attend school or receive home education. Children on unauthorised encampments had the poorest attendance levels.
25. The Gypsy and Traveller population was largely sedentary. However, over half of settled or authorised households still travelled seasonally – with some travelling more often than this. Being 'fed up' with travelling, getting older and poor health were the main reasons that were cited for not travelling.
26. Of those households who still travelled, around eight in ten respondents tended to engage in travelling to other parts of the UK; just one in ten travelled to areas close to where they lived within the Study Area.

27. Self-employment was a major source of income for respondents with the type of work people engaged in including: gardening/tree work, landscaping, carpet-related trades, uPVC and guttering, roofing and tarmacing.

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

28. Each of the five authorities mentioned Gypsies and Travellers in their Supporting People 5 Year Strategy. Reference is commonly made to the lack of services that are specifically provided for Gypsies and Travellers and also to the lack of evidence of the need for services for this group.
29. The kind of housing-related services Gypsies and Travellers expressed an interest in receiving assistance with included: support with planning, filling in forms, accessing a GP, accessing legal services, harassment issues and finding accommodation.

### **Accommodation preferences and aspirations**

30. All households were asked whether there was anyone living with them who were likely to want their own accommodation over the next 5 years. Overall, 5 households reported that their accommodation contained concealed households (amounting to 11 separate households in total) with a further 8 households reporting that older family members (totalling 9 separate households) would need independent accommodation in the next five years.
31. There was support for the creation of additional long-stay residential sites within the Study Area with around a fifth of respondents interested in moving to such a site. Respondents voiced a preference for residential sites with pitch capacities of around 20 pitches.
32. Around a third 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. According to the views of Gypsies and Travellers who would use such sites, these should be around 10 pitches in size with a large number of people expecting to use the site for between 1 and 4 weeks.
33. 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 a family-owned house and then by 'group housing' (site with long-stay and short-stay provision). Travelling around often staying on authorised transit sites and living on a site owned by a social landlord were both rated reasonably favourably. Living in a local authority or RSL house was the least favoured option.

## Accommodation need and supply

34. 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 increases in unauthorised accommodation, innovative house dwelling arrangements (living in trailers in the grounds of houses), overcrowding on sites and overcrowding within accommodation units (trailers, houses, chalets, etc.). In order to respond effectively and appropriately to the lack of suitable accommodation, to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, the regional planning body (North East Assembly) has the role of ensuring that all local authorities contribute, by working together, to resolving the current shortage of authorised site accommodation in a strategic manner, which helps redress current imbalances in the pattern of provision, and enhances the sustainability of the Gypsy and Traveller site network.
35. The 'models' for assessing the numerical requirement for additional residential pitches have developed significantly over the past few years. The calculation used here is an adaptation of the example provided by the CLG<sup>1</sup> with input from other work around the testing of GTAA robustness.<sup>2</sup> 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.
36. Additional requirements beyond 2013 are based on estimated household growth. This follows commonly accepted assumptions as to the growth of the population.<sup>3</sup>
37. Numerical transit requirements have not been provided although an indication of how to provide for short-stay households is detailed. This indicates that all local authorities should look to provide some form of provision for short-term users.
38. Requirements for the additional residential provision for Travelling Showpeople are estimated on the basis of survey findings and local authority information.
39. Because of the historical inequalities in pitch provision, Gypsies and Travellers have constrained choices as to where and how they would choose to live if they had real choice. So while choices for the non-Travelling

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<sup>1</sup> CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – Guidance*. London: HMSO.

<sup>2</sup> CLG (2007) *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy Reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies*. Wetherby, CLG.

<sup>3</sup> Household growth rates of 2% and 3% a year were suggested as appropriate in Pat Niner, *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, ODPM, 2003. A 3% growth rate was also used in the recent report from Communities and Local Government (2007) *Preparing Regional Spatial Strategy reviews on Gypsies and Travellers by regional planning bodies*. HMSO.

community are generally much wider, as there is social housing available in every authority in the country, there are no local authority sites in 138 of the 353 local authorities in England, and only in 71 authorities is there more than one site. Some authorities have no authorised private sites. Over time, this has inevitably meant that Gypsies and Travellers have generally moved to areas they see as offering the best life chances, for example, an authority which provides a site; an authority which is perceived as having more private authorised sites than others; or an authority that is attractive in some other way (slower enforcement, transport links, friends and family resident, etc.). Therefore, there is a tendency, when the need for additional accommodation is assessed, for the needs assessment to further compound these inequalities in site provision. For example, authorities which already provide Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (publicly or privately) are assessed as having greater need for additional pitch provision than authorities with little or no pitch provision. This is compounded further the longer-term the assessment is made (i.e. to 2018). However in order to assist in the long term planning of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision within emerging Local Development Frameworks pitch requirements are presented up to 2018.

40. Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs have been identified at a sub-regional and a local level on a ‘**need where it is seen to arise**’ basis. However, the results of this apportionment should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should be actually met in that specific locality. This distribution reflects the current uneven distribution of pitch provision for the Gypsy and Traveller population across the Study Area. Decisions about where need should be met should be strategic, taken in partnership with local authorities and the North East Assembly – involving consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and other interested parties – which will take into account wider social and economic planning considerations such as equity, choice and sustainability whilst being informed by the views of the Gypsies and Travellers who participated in this study. Table i below presents the ‘needs where they arise’ requirements.

Table i: Residential accommodation need arising from existing district level Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople populations

	Study Area Total	Gateshead	Newcastle	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunderland
Current authorised residential provision <sup>4</sup> (pitches)	173	14	0	0	32	127
<b>Additional residential need 2008–2013 (pitches)</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>39</b>
Additional residential need 2013–2018 (pitches)	29	4	1	1	5	18
<b>Estimated total additional residential pitch need 2008–2018</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>57</b>

Note: For pragmatic reasons these figures have been rounded up to the nearest whole pitch

<sup>4</sup> These are approximations of the provision (public and private) based on information obtained from the authorities during the course of the assessment. This includes Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites.

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## Glossary

The following terms are used in this report and may need some clarification. In the case of those terms which are related to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and culture, it is noted that a number of these terms are often contested and debated. It is not the intention of the authors to present these terms as absolute definitions; rather, the explanations provided are those the authors used in this assessment as their frames of reference.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Amenity block/shed</b>	On most residential Gypsy/Travellers sites these are buildings where basic plumbing amenities (bath/shower, WC and sink) are provided at the rate of one building per pitch.
<b>Authorised local authority site/Registered Social Landlord site</b>	An authorised site owned by either the local authority or a Registered Social Landlord.
<b>Authorised Private site</b>	An authorised site owned by a private individual (who may or may not be a Gypsy or a Traveller). These sites can be owner-occupied, rented or a mixture of owner-occupied and rented pitches.
<b>Bricks and mortar</b>	Permanent mainstream housing.
<b>Caravan</b>	Mobile living vehicle used by Gypsies and Travellers. Also referred to as trailers.
<b>Chalet</b>	In the absence of a specific definition the term 'chalet' is used here to refer to single storey residential units which resemble mobile homes but can be dismantled.
<b>Country People/Buffers</b>	Term used by Irish Travellers to refer to settled people/non-Travellers.
<b>Development Plan Documents (DPDs)</b>	Documents which outline the key development goals of the Local Development Framework.
<b>Doubling-up</b>	To share a pitch on an authorised site.
<b>Gaujo/Gorger</b>	Literal translation indicates someone who is not of the Romany Gypsy race. Romany word used mainly, but not exclusively, by Romany Gypsies to refer to members of the settled community/non-Gypsy/Travellers.
<b>Green Belt</b>	A policy or land use designation used to retain areas of largely undeveloped, wild, or agricultural land surrounding or neighbouring urban areas.
<b>Gypsy</b>	Members of Gypsy or Traveller communities. Usually used to describe Romany (English) Gypsies originating from India. This term is not acceptable to all Travellers.
<b>Gypsies and Travellers</b> (as used in this assessment)	Consistent with the Housing Act 2004, inclusive of: all Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Show People, Circus People and Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation. Can also include Roma and boat dwellers if there is evidence of a need, suppressed or otherwise, for pitch accommodation.

<b>Local Plan/Local Development Framework (LDF)</b>	A set of documents which a Local Planning Authority creates to describe their strategy for development and use of land in their area of authority.
<b>Mobile home</b>	Legally classified as a caravan but not usually moveable without dismantling or using a lorry.
<b>Pitch/plot</b>	Area of land on a site/development generally home to one licensee household. Can be varying sizes and have varying caravan occupancy levels. Often also referred to as a plot, particularly in relation to Travelling Showpeople. There is no agreed definition as to the size of a pitch.
<b>Pulling-up</b>	To park a trailer/caravan.
<b>Settled community/people</b>	Reference to non-Travellers (those who live in houses).
<b>Site</b>	An authorised area of land on which Gypsies and Travellers are accommodated in trailers/chalets/vehicles. Can contain one or multiple pitches.
<b>Static caravan</b>	Larger caravan than the 'tourer' type. Can be moved but only with the use of a large vehicle. Often referred to simply as a trailer.
<b>Stopping place</b>	Locations frequented by Gypsies and Travellers, usually for short periods of time.
<b>Supporting People</b>	A funding programme which provides grants in order to assist in the provision of housing-related support to develop and sustain an individual's capacity to live independently in their accommodation.
<b>Suppressed/concealed household</b>	Households, living within other households, who are unable to set up separate family units and who are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop one.
<b>Trailer</b>	Term commonly used by Gypsies and Travellers to refer to a moveable caravan.
<b>Transit site</b>	Site intended for short stays. Such sites are usually permanent, but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.
<b>Travelling Showpeople</b>	Commonly referred to as Showmen, these are a group of occupational Travellers who work on travelling shows and fairs across the UK and abroad.
<b>Unauthorised Development</b>	This refers to a caravan/trailer or group of caravans/trailers on land owned (possibly developed) by Gypsies and Travellers without planning permission.
<b>Unauthorised Encampment</b>	Stopping on private/public land without permission (e.g. at the side of the road).
<b>Yard</b>	Term used by Travelling Showpeople to refer to a site.

## List of Acronyms

<b>CLG</b>	Communities and Local Government
<b>CJPOA</b>	Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
<b>CRE</b>	Commission for Racial Equality
<b>DPD</b>	Development Plan Document
<b>GTAA</b>	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
<b>LDF</b>	Local Development Framework
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Association
<b>LPA</b>	Local Planning Authority
<b>NEA</b>	North East Assembly
<b>ODPM</b>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
<b>RHB</b>	Regional Housing Board
<b>RHS</b>	Regional Housing Strategy
<b>RPB</b>	Regional Planning Body
<b>RSL</b>	Registered Social Landlord
<b>RSS</b>	Regional Spatial Strategy
<b>SHUSU</b>	Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit
<b>TES</b>	Traveller Education Service

*Note:* Over the last few years the main Governmental department largely responsible for Gypsy and Traveller related issues (in particular regarding housing and planning) has been subject to certain degree of reform. This can cause confusion. The main changes are summarised below.

Until 2001 the **Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)** was the responsible department for these issues. In 2001 responsibility was passed to the **Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR)**. In 2002 the **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)** took control of these issues (within which the Gypsy and Traveller Unit was founded) with this being replaced by the **Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)** in 2006.



# 1. Overview

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople<sup>5</sup> across the Tyne and Wear Study Area. This research and report was commissioned by the Tyne and Wear Housing Partnership in November 2007. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing & Urban Studies Unit at the University of Salford, assisted by staff at the Centre for Urban and Regional Research at the University of Birmingham. The study was greatly aided by research support and expertise from members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The study was managed by the Partner Authorities and other key stakeholders including representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

## Background and study brief

- 1.2 One of the most significant historical developments in terms of site provision for Gypsies and Travellers was introduced in part 2 of The 1968 Caravan Sites Act which placed a requirement on local authorities to provide sites for local Gypsies 'residing in or resorting to their areas'. At the same time, however, it gave local authorities the power to designate 'no-go' areas for Gypsies and Travellers. The obligation on local authorities in England and Wales to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers ceased in January 1994 with the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA). This Act strengthened the law related to trespass, which the then Conservative Government deemed necessary to tackle 'the destruction and distress caused mainly to rural communities by trespassers'.<sup>6</sup> The Act repealed part 2 of the 1968 Caravan Sites Act and also repealed section 70 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, which gave powers to central government to meet the capital costs of the development of sites. Although local authorities still had *powers* to provide caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers under section 24 of the 1960 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, they were under no legislative *obligation* to do so, and few used this power.
- 1.3 Gypsies and Travellers were therefore encouraged to apply for planning permission to create their own sites in areas they frequent. Over the subsequent years, coupled with continued migration, travelling patterns and household formation, this has meant that the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers requiring authorised places to live/stop far outweigh the number of authorised pitches available. In addition to the lack of available authorised

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<sup>5</sup> Throughout this report the term Gypsies and Travellers includes all Gypsy and Traveller populations thought to require pitch/plot-based accommodation including Travelling Showpeople (see 'Note on terminology' later in this chapter). Specific issues relevant to separate groups of Gypsies and Travellers are discussed at the appropriate points within the report.

<sup>6</sup> The then Home Secretary, Michael Howard MP, cited in Sibley, D. (2001) 'The Control of Space: Travellers, Youth, and Drug Cultures' in Morley, D. and Robins, K. (eds) *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality and Identity*. Oxford:OUP.p.425.

pitches, Gypsies and Travellers have also found gaining planning permission a major obstacle to providing a site for themselves and their families, particularly as the areas they frequented were often already identified for other use or were not deemed suitable for Gypsy and Traveller use. Those Gypsies and Travellers who can afford to buy land are frequently in breach of planning laws when they attempt to develop that land for residential use. Subsequently, they find themselves subject to enforcement action and are often evicted, frequently resorting to the use of further unauthorised land/accommodation.

- 1.4 Under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985, local authorities are required to consider the various accommodation needs of the local population and to carry out periodic reviews in order to provide relevant and appropriate provision to meet these needs. Recent legislation (Housing Act 2004 and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and guidance (Circulars 01/2006; 04/2007) from the government indicate a commitment to taking steps to resolve some of these longstanding 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.
- 1.5 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 (GTAAAs) 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 North East Assembly (NEA), for inclusion into the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS then specifies pitch numbers required (but not their location) for each local planning authority (LPA) in light of the GTAAAs produced, and a strategic view of need, supply and demand across the region is taken. The local planning authority's Local Development Framework (LDF), composed of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), then identifies specific sites to match pitch numbers from the RSS. Deliverability is an important element as the number of pitches set out in the RSS must be translated into specific allocations; paragraphs 33 and 34 of Circular 01/2006 state that DPDs' criteria must not be used as an alternative to site allocations in DPDs where there is an identified need for pitches.
- 1.6 Each DPD is subject to examination in public and will be tested for 'soundness'. There are three tests of soundness which require that the DPD is Justified, Effective and Consistent with national policy; the data received and analysed through a GTAA is fundamental in providing a robust evidence base for the RHS and RSS.

- 1.7 The regional dimension to GTAAs is intended to ensure that all local authorities contribute to resolving the current shortage of authorised site accommodation in a strategic manner, which helps redress current imbalances in the pattern of provision, and enhances the sustainability of the Gypsy and Traveller site network. This dimension also aims to address guidance from the CLG around the development of appropriate options for transient Gypsies and Travellers in order to better facilitate an authorised travelling way of life. Such a strategic approach will contribute to meeting the Government's objective<sup>7</sup> that '*Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community should live together peacefully*', and to the greater social inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers who are among the most deprived groups in the population.
- 1.8 In order to comply with the CLG's increasing emphasis on taking regional strategic approaches, and also recognising the diverse characteristics of the Gypsy and Traveller populations, it is considered good practice for several authorities to commission such work jointly. Thus, for the Partner Authorities this study provides a credible evidence base and robust sub-regional understanding of the current provision, gaps and accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area.

## **Aims of the assessment**

- 1.9 The broad aims and objectives of the study were to produce:
1. an Accommodation Needs Assessment capable of desegregation to district level with a comprehensive assessment of existing and future accommodation and wider service needs within each area.
  2. an assessment of the current need for different types of accommodation available to the Gypsy and Travelling communities across the Tyne and Wear Sub-Region.
  3. an assessment of the mobility patterns and the drivers of mobility within communities.
  4. an understanding of the demographic profile of the Gypsy and Traveller communities, household formation within them, routes into accommodation and housing and wider support needs.
  5. a tailored methodology for carrying out future GTAAs for Tyne & Wear authorities.

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<sup>7</sup> ODPM (2006) *Local authorities and Gypsies and Travellers: Guide to responsibilities and powers*, ODPM, p. 5.  
[http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/400/LocalAuthoritiesandGypsiesandTravellersGuidetoresponsibilitiesandpowersPDF223KB\\_id1163400.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/400/LocalAuthoritiesandGypsiesandTravellersGuidetoresponsibilitiesandpowersPDF223KB_id1163400.pdf)

## **A note on terminology**

### **Gypsies and Travellers**

- 1.10 Defining Gypsies and Travellers is not straightforward. Different definitions are used for a variety of purposes. At a very broad level the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' is used by non-Gypsies and Travellers to encompass a variety of groups and individuals who have in common a tradition or practice of nomadism. More narrowly both Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised minority ethnic groupings.
- 1.11 At the same time Gypsies and Travellers have been defined for accommodation and planning purposes. The statutory definition of Gypsies and Travellers for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment required by the Housing Act 2004 is:
- (a) persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan; and*
  - (b) all other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including:*
    - (i) such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently; and*
    - (ii) members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).*
- 1.12 There is a separate definition for planning purposes as specified in ODPM Circular 01/2006 which offers a narrower definition and excludes Travelling Showpeople.
- 1.13 This assessment has adopted the Housing Act 2004 definition and has sought to be inclusive in the Gypsy and Traveller groupings. More specifically it sought to include all Gypsies and Travellers (including New Travellers) living in caravan-based or bricks and mortar accommodation. As the Housing Act 2004 definition indicates, we have also sought to include Travelling Showpeople living on their permanent base within the Study Area.

### **Housing/accommodation need**

- 1.14 Crucially, for Gypsies and Travellers, the definition of housing need is varied slightly to acknowledge the different contexts in which members of these communities live. The general definition of housing need is "households who are unable to access suitable housing without some financial assistance", with housing demand defined as "the quantity of housing that households are willing and able to buy or rent."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> ODPM (2006) Definition of the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004. Consultation Paper, February, London: HMSO.

1.15 In recognising that in many cases these definitions are inappropriate for Gypsies and Travellers, the guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments refers to distinctive requirements that necessitate moving beyond the limitations of the definition for both caravan dwellers and those in bricks and mortar housing. For caravan dwelling households, need may take the form of those:<sup>9</sup>

- who have no authorised site on which to reside;
- whose existing site accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable, but who are unable to obtain larger or more suitable accommodation; and
- who contain suppressed households who are unable to set up separate family units and are unable to access a place on an authorised site, or obtain or afford land to develop one.

1.16 In the context of bricks and mortar dwelling households, need may take the form of:

- those whose existing accommodation is overcrowded or unsuitable (including unsuitability by virtue of psychological aversion to bricks and mortar accommodation).

1.17 This assessment has used a definition of accommodation need which encompasses all the circumstances detailed above. It is based on Gypsies' and Travellers' own perception of their need and the sort of accommodation they would look for to meet that need. While some may see this as a measure of 'aspiration' or 'demand' rather than 'need', we believe that this is justifiable for two different reasons:

- This is the approach taken in most other Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) of which we are aware. Despite the Guidance, there is no method at present of reliably distinguishing 'need' from 'aspiration' for Gypsies and Travellers.
- More significantly, because of a current national shortage of sites, frequent hostility to proposals for site provision and the need for new sites to gain planning permission, site requirements can only be met through conscious public policy actions. In this sense, all requirement is 'need' in a way which is normally not true of bricks and mortar housing with its large second-hand market.

1.18 Need is assessed at the level of a single family unit or household (broadly a group of people who regularly live and eat together). On Gypsy and Traveller sites, this is assumed to equate to a 'pitch'; in housing, to a separate dwelling.

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<sup>9</sup> CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments – Guidance*. London: HMSO.

1.19 Needs are estimated in Chapters 15 and 17 as at January 2009, and are expressed for two 5-year periods 2008–2013 and 2013–2018.

### **The scope of a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA)**

1.20 The current round of GTAAs are the first documents of their kind which endeavour to quantify the current and future accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Although they are and should be held to be tests of robustness and soundness, there are important points to note in terms of what can be reasonably expected from a GTAA. A GTAA can be expected to:

- provide pitch requirements on a Study Area and local authority level on a 'needs where they arise' basis. GTAAs cannot move to a position of 'needs where they should be met' due to likely compromises this makes with the robustness of the calculating need;
- provide an indication of the demographics of the 'known' Gypsy and Traveller population but cannot provide an accurate picture of the total population – particularly if the population is located in bricks and mortar housing;
- provide an indication of the preferences and aspirations of the community but struggle to delineate this from demand/need;
- provide an indication of prior and likely future travelling patterns; and
- provide an indication of education-, health- and housing-related support experiences.

1.21 These issues are dealt with further in Chapter 18 and Appendix 3. It is important that the expectations placed upon a GTAA, particularly those which form the current round of assessments, are realistic. It will be necessary to continue with research and consultation with Gypsy and Traveller populations in order to better understand their accommodation issues. It is likely that if more sites are provided, Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will have greater choice around where to live and increased opportunities. In turn, subsequent assessments of accommodation need for these groups may be able to move from a 'needs where they arise' position to 'needs where they should be met'.

1.22 It should be noted that it is the belief of the authors that this GTAA complies with the requirements set out in Circulars 01/06 and 04/07.

## Conventions

1.23 Two conventions are followed in this report:

- Percentages in text and tables are rounded to the nearest whole number; this means that they do not always sum to exactly 100.
- 'Quotes' included from Gypsies and Travellers are sometimes in first and sometimes in third person form because interviews were not recorded. They are distinguished by being in italic type and usually inset.

## **2. The assessment methodology**

2.1 Draft practice guidance for local authorities undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments was released by the ODPM (now CLG) in February 2006 with final guidance made available in October 2007. Specialised guidance and assessments was felt to be required as many local authority housing needs assessments were previously failing to assess or identify the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The Guidance explains why assessments are needed, how authorities might go about conducting an assessment and issues to consider. The Guidance is non-prescriptive in terms of methods but suggests that Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments incorporate a number of components. Such components include existing data sources; the experiences and knowledge of key stakeholders; and the living conditions and views of Gypsies and Travellers.

2.2 This assessment was undertaken in three distinct stages:

- Stage one – collation and review of existing secondary information
- Stage two – consultation with service providers and other stakeholders
- Stage three – survey with Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area.

2.3 Each of these stages is described in more detail below.

### **Stage One: Collation and review of existing secondary information**

2.4 This first stage comprised a review of the available literature and secondary sources obtained from government (central and local) and regional, community and academic bodies. This provided an historical, social and political overview to the situation of Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area. More specifically this included the collection, review and synthesis of:

- The bi-annual Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans.
- Local Plans, Regional and Core Strategy documents and other literature relevant to Local Development Frameworks. Housing Strategies, Homelessness Strategies and Supporting People strategies were analysed as was local authority allocation and monitoring procedures.
- Various records and data maintained and provided by the local authorities. Information was obtained on: socially rented sites; private sites; resident demographics; waiting lists; unauthorised sites (developments and encampments); housing; and planning applications.

- 2.5 Much of this information was collected via an extensive self-completion questionnaire aimed at each authority, and joint-working between housing, planning, environmental health, health and education was required in order to provide a completed questionnaire. All local authorities completed this questionnaire.

## **Stage Two: Consultation with service providers and other stakeholders**

- 2.6 The second stage involved gathering the views of various service providers and other stakeholders and drew on their experience and perceptions of the main issues for Gypsies and Travellers. This stage was a vital way in which initial findings could be checked and set in context by the qualitative experience of stakeholders.
- 2.7 A number of one-to-one consultations, some extensive and some short, were held with a variety of other stakeholders, most of whom were recommended to the research team by either the Working Group or by other key stakeholders we came into contact with during the course of the assessment.
- 2.8 These discussions were largely structured around three broad issues:
- The particular experiences that certain stakeholders have in relation to the accommodation and related needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area;
  - The current working practices of different professionals in relation to Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area; and
  - Stakeholder perspectives on what the priority needs are for Gypsies and Travellers across the Study Area.
- 2.9 Where required these discussions were more focused upon clarifying information provided during stage one.

## **Stage Three: Survey with Gypsies and Travellers**

- 2.10 One of the most important aspects of the assessment was consulting with local Gypsies and Travellers; the vast majority of the fieldwork took place between February 2008 and September 2008.<sup>10</sup> These consultations took the form of face-to-face interviews in order to gather information about their characteristics, experiences, accommodation and related needs and aspirations. The survey with Gypsies and Travellers is discussed below under three sections: sampling strategy and response rates; questionnaire design; and fieldwork and interviewers.

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<sup>10</sup> Additional fieldwork took place in December 2008 in order to ensure Gypsies and Travellers who were travelling earlier in the year were provided with additional opportunities to contribute to the assessment.

## Sampling and response rates

2.11 Sampling Gypsy and Traveller households for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments is always problematic given the absence of accurate information concerning the size and location of the Travelling communities. As such the sampling technique for the assessment was purposive rather than purely random. The sampling strategy for the assessment differed depending upon the particular accommodation type currently inhabited by Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area.<sup>11</sup>

- For households on the socially rented site and the authorised private site we compiled a sample frame from information provided by the local authorities concerned. We set an aspirational quota for the interviews of 50% of the occupied pitches on these sites. Repeat visits were made to locations in order to achieve interviews if households were away from the site, it was not convenient for the household in question or the fieldworkers ran out of time. As can be seen from Table 1 we had partial success in involving people in the interviews.
- For households on unauthorised encampments, local authority officers from all boroughs were encouraged to inform the fieldwork team when and where encampments occurred during the fieldwork period. When notified of their occurrence, visits were made to all sites if the team had details of their approximate location and information on relevant health and safety issues. We were notified of 11 separate encampments by local authority officers. Fieldwork team members also sought to utilise their own contacts to trace any unauthorised sites. Although the fieldwork team generally arrived at an encampment site within 48 hours after notification the fieldwork team had varied success in securing interviews with households on encampments. There were two main reasons for this: a number of households were reluctant to be interviewed; and sites were occasionally vacated before we got there. It appears as though these encampments were reflective of the encampments that took place during the fieldwork. Information provided by the local authorities indicated that Gateshead recorded 14 encampments; Newcastle recorded 1 encampment; North Tyneside recorded 6 encampments; and South Tyneside recorded 2 encampments.<sup>12</sup>
- As the population of Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar housing is relatively hidden from official records there was no sample frame from which to identify people. Therefore, in order to engage with housed Gypsies and Travellers the fieldwork team relied on three main methods: contacts of Gypsies and Travellers who had already been interviewed as part of the assessment; the contacts of the Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers on the fieldwork team; and contacts provided by stakeholders.

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<sup>11</sup> Such a sampling strategy coupled with the lack of knowledge about the overall size of the Gypsy and Traveller population means that discussing statistical issues such as sampling error and confidence intervals would be misleading.

<sup>12</sup> Sunderland did not provide information on the number of encampments.

- Travelling Showpeople – contact with Travelling Showpeople was made possible by links provided by the local section of the Showmen’s Guild and the networks of a Community Interviewer who was a member of the Guild.

2.12 A total of 139 Gypsy and Traveller households were involved in the assessment within the boundaries of the authorities comprising the Study Area.

2.13 Table 1 below shows the aspirational target number of household interviews by achieved household interviews for each accommodation type. The targets were devised from information supplied by the authorities and informed by local knowledge as to actual pitches/households in area. As can be seen, three of the targets for accommodation type were achieved and exceeded. In spite of the general uncertainty surrounding contacting households on unauthorised encampments, the target was exceeded. In general, the exceeding or otherwise of targets tends to be a reflection of the difficulty in setting initial quotas for interviews in the current climate of information paucity on Gypsies and Travellers coupled with a general suspicion around getting involved in research. Having said that, in general terms the fieldwork team, which included members of the Gypsy and Traveller community, were well received by most of the individuals they endeavoured to engage with.

2.14 The aspirational target of 50 interviews with households in bricks and mortar housing reflects the pre-fieldwork belief of the authors that the Study Area had a significant number of Gypsies and Travellers in housing in the Study Area. The operational experiences of the fieldwork team appear to have supported this initial assertion and it is valuable that the views and needs of this often hidden section of the population are reflected in the study.

Table 1: Achieved household interviews by target

Type of accommodation	Target (No.)	Achieved (No.)	%
Socially rented sites	7	5	71
Residential private authorised pitches	6	3	50
Unauthorised developments <sup>13</sup>	0	4	NA
Unauthorised encampments	5 <sup>14</sup>	21	420
Housed <sup>15</sup>	50	50	100
Travelling Showpeople	50	54	108
Other <sup>16</sup>	NA	2	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>118</b>

<sup>13</sup> The households occupying caravans classified as unauthorised developments in the Study comprised, in all cases, of caravans occupying land adjoining a bricks and mortar dwelling see Chapter 7 for more information.

<sup>14</sup> This estimate is based on the average number of encampments in the area over five periods of the Caravan Count and divided by a 1.7 caravan to household ratio.

<sup>15</sup> In the absence of records about the size of the bricks and mortar population in the study area but placed an arbitrary target of 50 interviews.

<sup>16</sup> Caravans classed as ‘other’ where households were currently staying on the driveway of a family/friend’s bricks and mortar dwelling.

- 2.15 The number of Travelling Showpeople households in the area was estimated by a community interviewer prior to beginning data gathering. As can be seen, this target was exceeded. This is due to the contacts held by the interviewer and the apparent size of the Travelling Showpeople sites in the Study Area (see Chapter 14).
- 2.16 Table 2 below illustrates how the assessment sample relates to the known number of pitches and estimated population by accommodation type. As can be seen, we endeavoured to include all known sites in the Study. We therefore believe that by taking account of the lack of knowledge about the spread and proportion of the community the sample is as representative as can be reasonably expected.

Table 2: Sample in relation to local Gypsy and Traveller population

Type of accommodation	No. of sites			No. of pitches/households		
	Total	Sample	%	Total	Sample	%
Socially rented sites	1	1	100	14	5	36
Residential private authorised sites	1	1	100	7	3	43
Unauthorised developments	NA	NA	NA	0	5	NA
Unauthorised encampments	NA	NA	NA	21	21	100
Housed	NA	NA	NA	50	50	100
Travelling Showpeople	4	4	100	152 <sup>17</sup>	54	35
Other	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	NA

- 2.17 Table 3 shows this response rate by local authority area. The distribution of the sample appears to broadly reflect the anticipated known location of concentrations of Gypsies and Travellers by accommodation types with most interviews being carried out in Sunderland (mostly Travelling Showpeople), Gateshead and Newcastle. It should be noted that all local authorities have Gypsies and Travellers living within their boroughs in some form of accommodation.

Table 3: Number of achieved interviews by local authority area

Accommodation Type	Local authority area					Total
	Gateshead	Newcastle	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunderland	
Socially rented sites	5	0	0	0	0	5
Residential private authorised sites	0	0	0	3	0	3
Other	2	0	0	0	0	2
Unauthorised developments	0	3	1	0	0	4
Unauthorised encampments	10	4	2	3	2	21
Housed	11	21	6	4	8	50
Travelling Showpeople	0	0	0	13	41	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>139</b>

<sup>17</sup> This is an estimate based on information received from the Showmen's Guild and the local authorities.

- 2.18 In terms of the gender split between interviewees, we spoke to 92 men (66%) and 47 women (34%). The greater presence of men in the sample is unusual for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAs) as most GTAAs surveys predominantly feature the responses of women.<sup>18</sup> However, the greater presence of men in this sample might be explained by two reasons: firstly, the presence of a male Gypsy community interviewer – who was more likely to interview men rather than women (due to cultural gender constraints); and secondly, the number of Travelling Showpeople in the study – where men tend to be more inclined to talk to interviewers. In addition, we also endeavoured to undertake fieldwork outside of normal working hours, which may have assisted in engaging with more men than is usual.
- 2.19 Overall, we believe that the findings for the assessment are based on reliable and reflective response rates from accommodation types and geographical areas within the Study Area. Based on a base population of 273 we consulted with 112 resident households,<sup>19</sup> 41% of the estimated resident Gypsy and Traveller community across the Study Area.

### **The size of the local Gypsy and Traveller community**

- 2.20 For most minority ethnic communities, presenting data about the size of the community in question is usually relatively straightforward (with the exception of communities who have large numbers of irregular migrants and migrant workers etc. amongst them). However, for Gypsies and Travellers, one of the most difficult issues is providing accurate information on the size of the population (see Chapter 4). As a result, we have used information provided by the local authorities and key stakeholders, together with our survey findings, in order to provide a best estimate as to the size of the local Gypsy and Traveller population (see Table 4) at the time of the assessment. Due to their mobility levels this estimate does not include households on unauthorised encampments, developments or households residing on ‘other’ forms of accommodation. Populations on unauthorised sites typically have precarious planning status; therefore including them would distort and possibly skew the size of the local population if they move or application is refused.
- 2.21 We estimate that there are at least 983 Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area, although the estimate for housed Gypsies and Travellers is likely to be an underestimate.

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<sup>18</sup> Similar proportions have been found in a minority of other GTAAs, for example CURS (2008), The accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull.

<sup>19</sup> Excludes households on unauthorised sites.

Table 4: Gypsy and Traveller population based in the area

Type of accommodation	Families/ Households (based on 1 pitch = 1 household)	Individuals	Derivation
Socially rented sites	14	58	Based on occupied pitches at the time of the assessment and the actual number from local authority records.
Private sites	7	30	Estimated number of pitches multiplied by average household size from the survey (4.3)
Housing	100 <sup>20</sup>	500	Number of families estimated to live in the area multiplied by average household size from the survey (5)
Travelling Showpeople	152	395	Number of plots multiplied by the average household size for Travelling Showpeople (2.6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>983</b>	

### Questionnaire design

2.22 All interviews with Gypsy and Traveller households have utilised a structured questionnaire upon which questions were routed according to the appropriate accommodation type. Questions were a mixture of tick-box answers and open-ended questions. This mixed approach enabled us to gather quantifiable information, but also allowed for contextualisation and qualification by the more narrative responses. There were 3 questionnaires produced, one for Gypsies and Travellers on sites, one for Gypsies and Travellers in housing and one for site-based Travelling Showpeople. Each survey contained the following sections:

- Current accommodation/site/encampment;
- Experience of travelling;
- Housing and site experiences;
- Household details;
- Services; and
- Future accommodation preferences/aspirations.

2.23 Following consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, questions around income and benefits were excluded as these were seen to potentially jeopardise the ability to achieve interviews in the Study Area due to alienation that such questions can cause with the communities.

<sup>20</sup> We did not receive any information regarding the accurate size of the Gypsy and Traveller bricks and mortar-based population. The Commission for Racial Equality's 2006 report *Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers* suggested that the housed population was around 3 times the trailer-based population (see section 1.2 of this report). Therefore, as a conservative estimate, we assume we have interviewed 50% of the actual bricks and mortar-based population. Therefore, this figure is derived from doubling the number of interviews conducted in each local authority area (Gateshead – 22; Newcastle – 42; N Tyneside – 12; S Tyneside – 8; and Sunderland – 16).

- 2.24 The questionnaires used in the assessment are available in a separate document entitled 'Survey Instruments'.

### **Fieldwork and interviewers**

- 2.25 In addition to SHUSU fieldwork staff, and of crucial importance to engaging as effectively as possible with the Gypsy and Traveller population, was the involvement of Gypsy and Traveller Community Interviewers. In total, two members of the Gypsy and Traveller community were involved in the assessment as Community Interviewers.
- 2.26 In order to standardise our fieldwork approach, each interviewer was required to undergo an intensive training course on interviewer skills applicable to this particular study, and provided with support from the core study team members during their interviewing activity. Each questionnaire which was returned to us was subject to quality control and appropriate feedback was given to the interviewers. By taking this approach we found we were able to access a range of people that would not otherwise have been included in the assessment, such as 'hidden' members of the community (older people or people living in bricks and mortar housing), and those people who were uncomfortable talking to non-Travellers.

### **3. Planning and Housing Policy context**

3.1 For the most part Gypsies and Travellers are affected by legislation in much the same way as members of the non-Travelling communities. However, it is the policy areas of housing and planning that have particular implications for Gypsies and Travellers. In recognising that there is a significant lack of accommodation options for the various Gypsy and Traveller groups, a plethora of documents have been published over the last 2 years that directly affect specific policies towards Gypsies and Travellers. This section looks at the relevant national, regional and local planning policies affecting Gypsies and Travellers at the time of the assessment.

#### **National policy**

3.2 The main document detailing the broad aims of the current policy towards the accommodation and planning objectives for Gypsies and Travellers is Circular 01/06. In particular, this specifies that the aims of the legislation and policy developments are to:

- ensure that Gypsies and Travellers have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision;
- reduce the number of unauthorised encampments;
- increase the number of sites and address underprovision over the next 3–5 years;
- protect the traditional travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers;
- underline the importance of assessing accommodation need at different geographical scales;
- promote private site provision; and
- prevent Gypsies and Travellers becoming homeless where eviction from unauthorised sites occurs and where there is no alternative accommodation.

3.3 An overview of the process and system for ensuring adequate provision is implemented for Gypsies and Travellers was detailed in Chapter 1 of this report.

3.4 In September 2007, revised planning guidance in relation to the specific planning requirements of Travelling Showpeople was released in Circular 04/07. This replaces Circular 22/91 and aims to ensure that the system for pitch assessment, identification and allocation as introduced for Gypsies and Travellers is also applied to Travelling Showpeople.

- 3.5 The Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant provides capital funding for improving and increasing Gypsy and Traveller site/pitch provision by local authorities and Registered Social Landlords. From 2006–08 a national total of £56m has been made available, managed by the Regional Housing Boards or equivalents. In the North East, a total of £605,000 has been agreed over the 2006–08 period. A total of £3m has been made available over the 2008–11 period for the North East. Since 2006, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) have been able to set up and manage Gypsy and Traveller sites. Both local authorities and RSLs are eligible for funding under the Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant.
- 3.6 Since the introduction of the Housing Act 2004, it has been made clear that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need and requirements should feature in local authority Housing and Homelessness<sup>21</sup> Strategies. Authorities have been informed that in line with their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the needs and way of life of Gypsies and Travellers must be considered when considering accommodation applications.
- 3.7 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 updated fundamental planning legislation. The existing system of using Development Plans to set out Local Planning Policies was revised and made way for the Local Development Framework (LDF). Within this, Core Strategies set out the overall planning framework for each district, and all other Local Development Framework policy documents will build on the principles in it and need to comply with it.

## **Regional policy**

- 3.8 In terms of regional planning policy, within Improving Inclusivity and Affordability (Policy 30) of the North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021<sup>22</sup> reads:

*Provision of sites for gypsies and travellers*

- a. Local authorities should carry out an assessment of the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Showpeople. Collaboration between authorities on these studies is encouraged to more fully understand the patterns of need and the adequacy of current provision; and*
- b. Local development frameworks / documents should provide the criteria following the plan, monitor and manage and sequential approaches for the provision and release of pitches for the Gypsy and Travelling and Showpeople communities and, where appropriate, identify locations for these pitches.*

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<sup>21</sup> See Homelessness & Housing Support Directorate (2006) Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, CLG.

<sup>22</sup> Adopted in 2008.

3.9 The North East Assembly's *Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment Final Report* was published in March 2007. This is based on information from secondary sources or provided by local authorities, together with a small survey of Gypsies and Travellers. It provides preliminary assessments of need for additional pitches to 2005 calculated from current shortfalls evidenced by the Caravan Counts with a 15% uplift for under-counting, and assumed family growth at 2.5% a year. Needs are quantified at regional and sub-regional levels. Newcastle and Gateshead make up a sub-region, as do North and South Tyneside. Sunderland is in a sub-region with Chester-le-Street, Derwentside and Durham. Table 5 shows regional and sub-regional pitch requirements as assessed by this study.

Table 5: Pitch Requirements from the North East Assembly Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment

Date	Newcastle/ Gateshead	North Tyneside/ South Tyneside	Sunderland/ Chester-le- Street/ Derwentside/ Durham	North East Region
Current shortfall	12	2	0	49
By 2010	1	0	4	29
By 2015	1	0	7	42
By 2020	1	0	8	46
By 2025	1	0	9	53
Total requirement to 2025	16	2	28	219

3.10 Requirements, in this assessment, for the Study Area are modest. The Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment suggests that the total additional pitch requirement might be split in a 3:1 ratio between residential and transit provision. This would give a requirement to 2025 for the Study Area of perhaps 18 additional residential and 6 additional transit pitches (assuming that most need in the sub-region including Sunderland would arise in County Durham where most sites are currently provided).

3.11 Although this report was useful as a first step to understanding the shortfall of accommodation provision, the requirements outlined in this study should be superseded by the more local GTAA's.<sup>23</sup> Local level GTAA's are considered much more accurate than regional GTAA's with a larger geographical area due to the ability to deal with the complexity of local issues and involve more 'hidden' populations including households in bricks and mortar accommodation.

<sup>23</sup> This is stated at Para 8.5 of the Regional report.

## Local planning policy

- 3.12 When asked what sorts of areas would be deemed suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site provision, LPAs said that any site which is identified or proposed would be assessed against the current advice and guidance such as the criteria set out in their Local Plans or Core Strategies, or to ODPM Circulars 01/2006 and 04/2007.

### Local Plans

- 3.13 Each of the 5 LPAs has a policy towards Gypsy and Traveller site provision in its Local Plan. These are shown in Appendix 1. Although the Local Plan policies in use are in line with the previous government guidance and advice, it is clear that most are proactive and leave considerable discretion in their implementation. The criteria reflect concern for prospective site residents in terms of conditions, facilities and access to services, and for neighbours in terms of visual intrusion and adverse impact of local amenities.

### Emerging policies in Local Development Frameworks

- 3.14 In terms of Core Strategies, most constituent LPAs are at a fairly advanced stage within the new Local Development Framework system. A summary of policy proposals and related information can be found in Appendix 2. A more positive approach is evident in line with Circular 01/2006 as evidenced by the criteria used by South Tyneside Core Strategy being found sound at Examination in Public.<sup>24</sup> However, the lists of criteria to be satisfied are still quite extensive, especially in South Tyneside and Sunderland. Extensive criteria can make it more difficult for suitable sites to be found and developed and therefore it is important for emerging Local Development Framework policies to be practical and appropriate for allocating suitable sites and determining planning applications.
- 3.15 The Sunderland Housing Allocations Issues and Options DPD poses the following consultation question based on areas of the city currently frequented by Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites:

*Q36 If the HMA indicates a need for Gypsy and Travellers within the city, should we:*

- 1. Identify potential site/s within the Washington, Hetton and Fence Houses area?*
- 2. Identify potential sites on a city-wide basis?*
- 3. Consider opportunities for 'sub-regional sites', particularly with our neighbouring authorities?*

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<sup>24</sup> See [http://www.southtyneside.info/search/document\\_view.asp?mode=8&pk\\_document=13528](http://www.southtyneside.info/search/document_view.asp?mode=8&pk_document=13528)

3.16 None of the LPAs is currently considering a specific location as suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site development. When asked what sorts of areas would be deemed suitable for Gypsy and Traveller site provision, most LPAs referred either to the criteria set out in their Local Plans or Core Strategies, or to ODPM Circular 01/2006. More general guides were given:

**Gateshead:** Sites that have satisfactory access, within reasonable and practicable walking distance to facilities, including local schools and shops.

**Newcastle:** Urban fringe areas with reasonable access to service and amenities.

**South Tyneside:** Areas in conformity with adopted Core Strategy Policy SC5

**Sunderland:** A site within the local community which has good access to facilities and services. It could possibly be one that is suitable for general housing. Consideration will however be given to the business aspects of the Gypsies and Travellers.

## 4. Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area: The current picture

- 4.1 This chapter looks at the Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans in order to present what is known about Gypsies and Travellers within the Study Area. In particular, this section presents information on the size and spatial distribution of the Gypsy and Traveller population.

### Caravan Numbers and Trends from the Caravan Count

- 4.2 The bi-annual caravan count provides a snapshot of the local context in terms of the scale and distribution of caravan numbers across the sub-region. However, there are well documented issues with the robustness of the count,<sup>25</sup> which require any analysis to be treated with a degree of caution. Such issues include: the ‘snapshot’ nature of the data, the inclusion of caravans and not households, the exclusion of Travelling Showpeople, and the exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in housing. Nevertheless, the Count provides a useful starting point in assessing the current picture and recent trends. Indeed, in the absence of other datasets it is virtually the only source of information on Gypsy and Traveller caravan data.
- 4.3 With regard to this specific Study Area the Counts, over time, offer little information for analysis purposes. However, in order to broadly illustrate the caravan numbers within the Study Area this information is presented below.
- 4.4 Table 6 shows the distribution of caravans in the Study Area by type of site at January 2007. The proportions are compared with the North East Region and England. The North East Region has a distinctive profile compared to the national average with higher than average proportions of caravans on socially rented sites and lower than average proportions on unauthorised sites and particularly on unauthorised developments on Gypsy-owned land. The Study Area is markedly different from either Region or England. The only caravans returned in January 2007 were those on the social rented site in Gateshead. The 22 caravans on an unauthorised development (now a private site) in South Tyneside have never appeared in the Caravan Counts although information from the local authority suggests that they have been in the area for some time.

Table 6: Caravans by Type of Site January 2007

Type of site	Study Area		North East	England
	No.	%	%	%
Social rented	25	100	60	40
Private	0	0	36	39
Unauthorised – Gypsy-owned land	0	0	1	14
Unauthorised – other land	0	0	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>25</sup> Niner, P. (2002) Review of the ODPM Caravan Count. London: ODPM.

4.5 Table 7 summarises caravan numbers for the Study Area by type of site for January 1994 and 2007, and July in 1994 and 2006.<sup>26</sup> The types of unauthorised sites were not distinguished in 1994 and 'unauthorised site' includes both Gypsy-owned and other land.

Table 7: Summary of Caravan Numbers 1994 and 2007

Type of site	January			July		
	1994	2007	% change	1994	2007	% change
Social rented	48	25	-48%	32	28	-13%
Private	0	0	-	0	0	-
Unauthorised	22	0	∞	13	4	-69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>-64%</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>-29%</b>

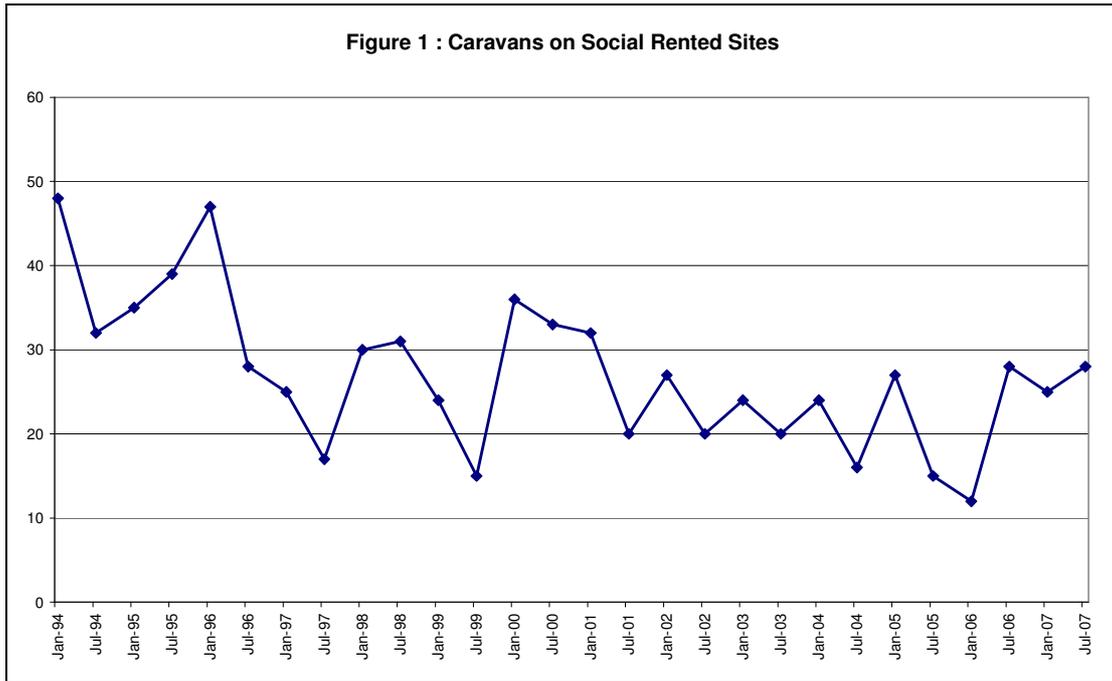
4.6 Table 7 shows the following:

- Overall caravan numbers have decreased since 1994, with a higher rate of decrease measured January to January than July to July. If the caravans on the unauthorised development (now a private site) in South Tyneside had been included, the rate of decrease would be less marked in January to January and would convert to an increase July to July.
- Unlike many other parts of the country, there has been no change in caravans on private sites over the period with a zero count at both dates.
- The number of caravans on social rented sites has decreased with the closure of the former site in Newcastle.
- The number of caravans on unauthorised sites has also decreased in the recorded figures, although inclusion of the unauthorised development (now a private site) in South Tyneside would change the picture to stability or a slight increase depending on the time period measured.

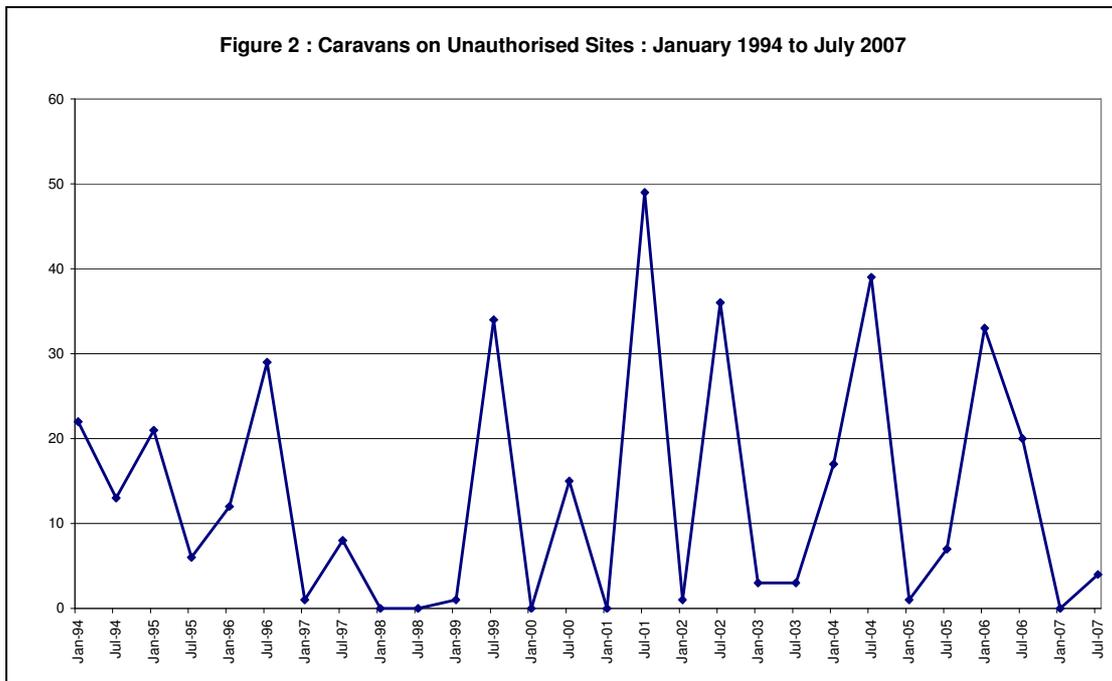
4.7 The charts on the following pages illustrate Study Area changes in caravan numbers on social rented and unauthorised sites over time which amplifies the apparent trends revealed in Table 7.

4.8 Figure 1 shows caravans on social rented sites. The overall decline is apparent with the closure of the site in Newcastle. There is some seasonality with caravan numbers often lower in July suggesting summer travelling.

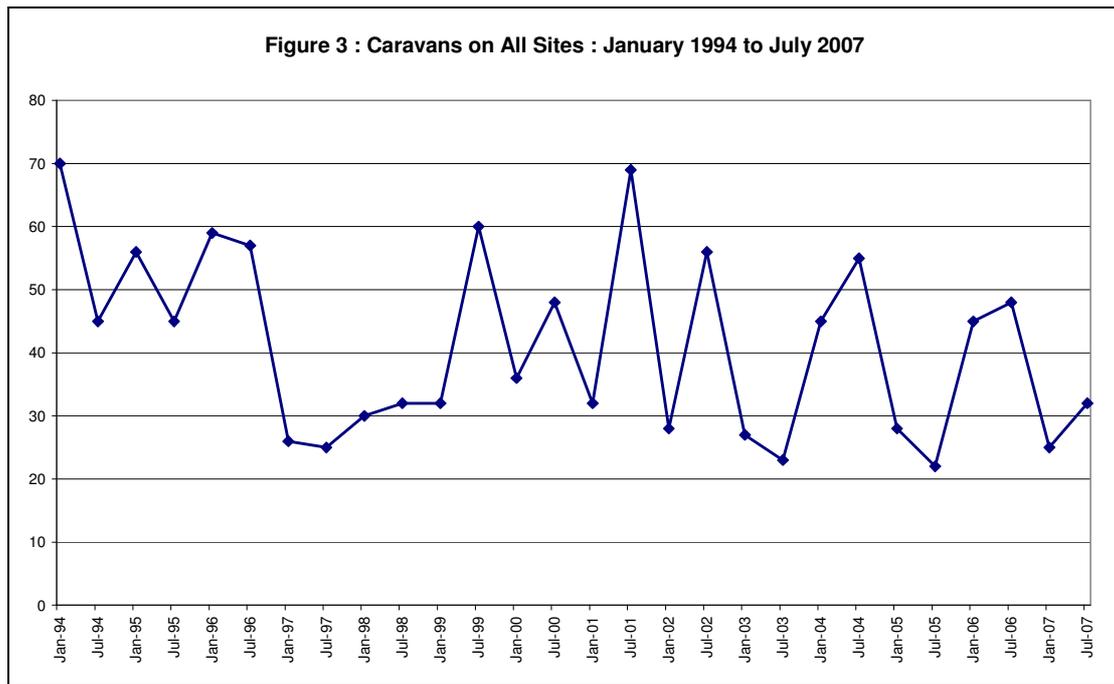
<sup>26</sup> 1994 is used as a baseline due to the reported effect the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 had on Gypsy and Traveller caravan-based populations in terms of increased powers to move trespassers and the removal of the duty to provide Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites.



4.9 Figure 2 shows numbers of caravans on unauthorised sites. There is little sign of an overall trend, but wide fluctuations illustrate the intermittent nature of unauthorised encampment in the Study Area, and its apparent seasonal nature.



4.10 Figure 3 shows caravans on all types of sites. Not surprisingly the line shows significant fluctuations reflecting unauthorised sites, but with a base established by the social rented sites. Again it is difficult to discern much long-term trend other than a general decline in numbers.



### Geographical Patterns

4.11 In January 2007 the only caravans counted were the 25 on the social rented site in Gateshead (but note the omission of the caravans on an unauthorised development in South Tyneside). Table 8 shows the distribution of caravans by type of site in January 1994.

Table 8: Caravans by Type of Site by Local Authority January 1994

Type of site	Study Area	Gateshead	Newcastle	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunderland
Socially rented	48	14	34	0	0	0
Private	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unauthorised	22	2	0	8	7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>

4.12 The major change since 1994 is the closure of the local authority site in Newcastle. Unauthorised encampment was at a higher level and scattered across the Study Area in 1994 compared to 2007.

## 5. Demographics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population

5.1 This chapter aims to provide some information on the demographics of the sample involved in this accommodation assessment within the Study Area.

### Demographic and household characteristics

5.2 Characteristics of Gypsy and Traveller communities are often hidden or not widely known. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments present an ideal opportunity to get to know more about the community at large, particularly in terms of living circumstances, age, Gypsy and Traveller groups and household composition. The following aims to provide some information about the composition of Gypsy and Traveller households in the sample.

### Age of interviewees

5.3 The age profile of the sample can be seen from Table 8. The 25–39 age group was the most consulted during the assessment, forming 38% of the total sample. This was followed by the 40–49 age group (22%) and then the 60–74 age group (16%). A total of 20% of the sample were aged 60 years and over.

Table 9: Age of interviewees

Age Group	No.	%
16–24	14	10
25–39	52	38
40–49	30	22
50–59	13	9
60–74	22	16
75–84	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	

Base: 137 respondents providing information

### Household size

5.4 In total, the survey sample accounts for 542 members of the Gypsy and Traveller community in the Study Area. The average household size for the whole sample is 3.9 persons – larger than the household size of the non-Traveller population. However, this hides a range in household sizes as indicated in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Household size distribution

Household Size	No.	%
1 Person	19	4
2 Persons	64	12
3 Persons	42	8
4 Persons	76	14
5 Persons	85	16
6 Persons	132	24
7 Persons	56	10
8 Persons	40	7
9 Persons	18	3
10 Persons	10	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>542</b>	

Base: 139 respondents providing information

- 5.5 There was significant variation in the size of households in relation to their current accommodation type as well. As can be seen from Table 11, respondents from socially rented sites and bricks and mortar tended to have the largest households. This is followed by households living on unauthorised encampments (4.3 persons) and households on the private site (4.3 persons). In comparison Travelling Showpeople, living on yards, tended to have modest sized households compared to the rest of the accommodation types.

Table 11: Average household size by accommodation type

Accommodation type	Average household size
Socially rented sites	5.6 <sup>27</sup>
Bricks and Mortar	5
Unauthorised encampments	4.3
Residential private sites	4.3
Unauthorised developments	3.5
Travelling Showpeople	2.6
Other	1

Base: 139 respondents providing information

<sup>27</sup> This conflicts with information from the local authority responsible for the site (Gateshead) which gives a lower household size figure. This discrepancy is possibly due to the partial coverage of this site in the fieldwork.

## Household type

5.6 Table 12 shows the household type by type of accommodation. Families have been classified as follows:

Family type	Definition
Single person -	1 adult
Couple -	2 adults, no children or young adults
Young family -	1 or 2 adults, 1 or more children aged up to 16 years; no young adults
Older family -	All adult family with 1 or more children classified as 'young adults' (over 16 years but living within another household)
Mixed family -	Family with children under and over 16 years
Other -	3 or more adults, none classified as young adults

Table 12: Household type by type of accommodation

Household type	Socially rented	Private site	T Show people	B&M	Unauth. encamp	Unaut. Dev	Other	Total
Number in sample	5	3	54	50	21	4	2	139
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Single	0	0	20	2	19	0	100	14
Couple	20	0	33	14	14	50	0	19
Young family	80	67	20	62	48	50	0	44
Older family	0	33	20	8	5	0	0	12
Mixed family	0	0	4	14	14	0	0	10
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Base: 139 respondents providing information

5.7 Table 12 shows that:

- Young families are currently the predominant household type in the Study Area.
- There is a spread of household types on the Travelling Showpeople Yards in the Study Area.
- There are more young families in bricks and mortar housing than any other accommodation type.
- There are also a large number of young families on unauthorised encampments.
- There are a number of older families from pitch/yard-based households in the Study Area which may indicate that there is some pressing need for additional pitch accommodation from household growth.

## Marital status

5.8 In total, 79% of the interviewees were married with a further 1% (1 respondent) living with their partner. The remainder described their marital status as single (10%); divorced/separated (6%), or widowed (5%).

Table 13: Marital status of the interview sample

<b>Marital status</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Married	108	79
Single	13	10
Divorced/Separated	8	6
Widowed	7	5
Living together	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	

Base: 137 respondents providing information

### **Local connections to the Study Area**

- 5.9 When asked, the majority of households (72%) felt that they were local to the area where they were currently accommodated.<sup>28</sup> See Table 14 for a breakdown by current accommodation type.

Table 14: Local to the area?

<b>Accommodation type</b>	<b>% of total sample</b>
Residential private sites	100
Other	100
Travelling Showpeople (yards)	94
Bricks and Mortar	70
Unauthorised encampments	33
Socially rented sites	20
Unauthorised developments	0

Base: 138 respondents providing information

- 5.10 As Table 14 shows, over two-thirds of all households consider their area of residence, the area where they were interviewed, their 'local' area. The numbers of respondents are small for private sites and 'other' forms of accommodation; however, Travelling Showpeople households and households in bricks and mortar accommodation appear particularly 'local'. A third of households on unauthorised encampments consider themselves as 'local', while this is the case for only a fifth of households on the socially rented site. Table 15 below looks in further detail at the reasons given by households when asked why they were in the Study Area.

<sup>28</sup> The term 'local' may have been interpreted differently by respondents but this generally referred to the immediate area where they were accommodated rather than belonging to any specific local authority borough.

Table 15: Reasons for residing in the Study Area (figures in % of sample)

Reason	Accommodation type							Total
	Unauth. dev	T Show people	B&M	Socially rented	Private site	Unauth. encamp	Other	
Family lives here	100	91	94	20	67	79	100	87
Work	0	69	16	0	0	21	0	36
Place of birth	0	26	57	20	0	11	50	33
Schooling	0	43	0	0	33	0	0	17
Only place available	25	28	0	0	0	32	0	16
Other	0	26	0	60	100	11	0	16
Family/community event	0	0	8	0	0	5	0	4
Holiday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Base: 138 respondents providing information

- 5.11 The presence of family in the Study Area was a major reason why households were residing where they were. This was particularly the case for households in bricks and mortar accommodation and on unauthorised encampments but also for Travelling Showpeople. These findings are broadly consistent with findings from other GTAAs. Work was also a major reason cited for Travelling Showpeople living where they do. In terms of 'other' reasons that were given we received diverse responses, for instance, one respondent said '*because the locals are nice*'. Another respondent said '*Because of the Doctors, I've got young babies, and the Doctors see us straight away*'. Similarly, other people found it difficult to name the main reason they were staying where they were and said '*It's just somewhere I decided to settle*'.
- 5.12 Interestingly, no households said they were in the area due to a holiday. Thus, from these findings the majority of Gypsies and Travellers on sites and in housing can be seen to 'belong', in some way, to the Study Area.<sup>29</sup>

### Gypsy and Traveller groups

- 5.13 The largest single group was Showpeople (39%), followed by Scottish Gypsies/Travellers (28%), followed by Irish Travellers (19%), Romany/Gypsies (11%), Traveller (not specified) (3%) and then New Traveller (1%).

Table 16: Interviewees by Gypsy and Traveller group

Gypsy and Traveller groups	No. of households	%
Showperson/Circus person	54	39
Scottish Gypsy/Traveller	39	28
Irish Traveller	26	19
Romany/Gypsy (English)	15	11
Traveller (not specified)	4	3
New Traveller	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	

Base: 139 respondents providing information

<sup>29</sup> Due to effect of nomadism Gypsies and Travellers can often 'belong' to multiple areas due to the sort of links people have in certain areas. Due to the presence of family in the Study Area it appears as though households on unauthorised encampments may have a sense of 'belonging' to areas that form part of this Study Area.

## 6. Authorised site provision: Findings

- 6.1 A certain degree of caution needs to be taken when extrapolating the characteristics, trends and needs of the Gypsy and Traveller population from the Caravan Counts and other such data alone. In order to provide more specific information on the local Gypsy and Traveller population, this chapter draws upon the survey completed by local authorities on site provision together with stakeholder views and knowledge. The chapter deals first with socially rented accommodation and then authorised private sites.

### Socially rented sites

- 6.2 There is one socially rented site in the Study Area at Baltic Road, Gateshead. This site is owned and managed by Gateshead Council with a Site Warden. It has 14 residential pitches, which were all occupied at the time of the survey. The site has been subject to a successful bid for a Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant to provide a children's play area and extend/improve all the amenity blocks. There was no reported intention at present to apply for a further Grant and there are no other plans for further changes to the site.
- 6.3 A site situated in Newcastle (consisting of 26 residential pitches) has been closed since 1994.
- 6.4 When asked about intentions for future provision, the local authorities said that plans for future local authority sites in the Study Area are dependent on the findings of the needs assessment.

### *Baltic Road, Gateshead*<sup>30</sup>

- 6.5 The **site population** is 58, an average of 4.14 people per pitch – this is relatively high but reflects the size of the pitches which are all double.<sup>31</sup> A total of 37 of the residents are children aged up to 16 (11 under 5, 18 aged 5–11 and 8 aged 12–16). Children thus form 64% of the site population, which is a high proportion. No pitches reportedly accommodate doubled up households. The site is occupied by a mix of English Gypsies and Irish Travellers. The average number of caravans to households was 1.8.
- 6.6 In terms of **site facilities**:
- Each pitch has its own amenity unit. There is a site office and a children's play area (identified as an example of good practice on the questionnaire). There is provision for residents to keep dogs.

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<sup>30</sup> Views from resident Gypsies and Travellers consulted may not represent the entire population of the site as the views represent 28 of the 58 residents.

<sup>31</sup> This conflicts with the findings from the survey of site residents. As such local authority records on site and pitch population are used.

- The amenity units have a shower only, a WC with direct access from outside, space/provision for cooking and laundry, and effective heating.
- All residents have touring caravans/trailers.
- All households consulted reported that the number of trailers they possessed provided enough space for their needs. One person commented that their pitch was too small.
- Residents were divided in their opinions on the facilities; three thought they were 'good' or 'very good', while two respondents thought the facilities were 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- All residents who we consulted viewed the management of the site in positive or ambivalent terms.

6.7 The responding officer from the local authority gave the following assessments of the **quality of the site**:

- Physical condition and maintenance – very good
- General surroundings and environment – good
- Location and access to schools and shops – average (because distance to shops and schools requires vehicular transport and the site is not on a public transport route)

6.8 In terms of residents' comments:

- All thought the size of site was 'good'
- Most thought the design of the site was 'good' with one respondent commenting that they thought the design was 'very poor'
- There was a divide in opinions about the location of the site; two respondents thought the location was 'good', one respondent was indifferent, while two respondents thought the location was 'very poor'
- Just one respondent reported **health and safety concerns** which centred on the need for fencing between pitches in order to keep children safe. A further two respondents comment later on in the survey that they wanted 'railings' around each pitch for their children's safety.

6.9 According to the local authority there have been no known instances of **disputes** between site residents, intimidation, vandalism or other antisocial behaviour over the last 12 months. Similarly, when asked, all residents consulted viewed their neighbours on the site in positive terms.

- 6.10 Licensees can be **absent** for 6 weeks a year while travelling (full licence fee payable during this time). They can, in practice, have **visitors** with caravans to stay on the site provided there is adequate space and with the permission of the Site Warden.
- 6.11 Most residents we spoke to had been on the site for **lengthy periods**. One respondent had been on the site for between 6 and 12 months and the remainder between 1 year and 5 years, with some occupying the site for longer than 5 years. All reported that they would be staying on the site indefinitely or didn't know how long they would remain on the site.
- 6.12 There is a formal **site waiting list** with 4 applications; this has remained broadly static over the last two or three years. There is no formal **pitch allocation policy**. The most important factors taken into account by the local authority when allocating pitches are:
- Previous known behaviour/references
  - Previous rent arrears
  - Family size/composition
- 6.13 Site **occupancy** was described as between 75% and 100% over the year 2007. About half of residents have lived on site for 5 years or longer. Over the four years 2004–2007, **turnover** was 5 pitches – an average of 1.25 a year (or equivalent to 9% of all pitches). However, turnover in 2006 and 2007 was much higher with an average of 2.5 pitches a year (18% turnover rate). All pitches were re-let in the year. The relatively high turnover rate was not thought by the warden to be due to any specific cause.
- 6.14 The **licence fee** is £40.00 a week for a double pitch (low in comparison with neighbouring Tees Valley sites). There is a damage deposit of £160 payable at the start of a licence. Almost all licensees receive housing benefit. No Supporting People payments are received for site residents.

## Private Gypsy and Traveller sites

- 6.15 This section looks at private sites across the Study Area. There was **one authorised private site** in the Study Area (given temporary permission during the course of the study).<sup>32</sup> This is in West Boldon, South Tyneside and has temporary permission for 22 caravans on 11 pitches but only 7 pitches have been occupied since the site was established.
- 6.16 There has been **no change** in private provision since 2001 in the Study Area.

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<sup>32</sup> The precise planning issues associated with this site are discussed in Chapter 7.

6.17 After repeated attempts to interview we managed to interview three respondents on the site. Because of the low number of responses it is difficult to discuss the findings from residents in terms of percentages; instead their answers to questions indicate that:

- Access to facilities is minimal (WC, kitchen, refuse collection and post only) there were no utilities supplied to the site.
- Electricity has to be supplied by generator, water obtained from a local garage and showers are accessed at the local community centre.
- There was a 'desperate' need for an improvement in facilities, in particular the supply of water and electricity.
- Residents had been on the site for a while; one for between 1 and 3 months and two for between 6 and 12 months.
- The respondents interviewed said they wanted to remain on the site 'indefinitely'.

6.18 However, it should be noted that when we first interviewed on the site the site was awaiting a planning decision and was classified as an unauthorised development. However, since receiving temporary planning permission, facilities do not appear to have improved greatly. It should be noted that during the Public Inquiry the appellants stated that they would be able to afford the installation of water to the site if the appeal was allowed.

## **7. Planning and the unauthorised development of sites: Findings**

- 7.1 Unauthorised developments are a major source of tension between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled population. The new planning system is intended to create conditions where there is no need for unauthorised developments because land will be allocated for authorised site development. This chapter looks in depth at the experience of local authorities of receiving planning applications to develop Gypsy and Traveller sites. In addition, this chapter focuses upon the development of Gypsy and Traveller sites without planning permission.

### **Planning applications**

- 7.2 Across the Study Area there have been two applications for planning permission in the last 5 years; both applications were to South Tyneside. This land was the subject of 2 planning applications in June 2005 (for 5 caravans, withdrawn) and December 2005 (for 3 caravans). This latter application was refused in May 2006 on grounds predominantly to do with inappropriate development in the Green Belt and breach of associated policies, and remoteness from facilities. No appeal was submitted.
- 7.3 The land was re-occupied in July 2007 and a Temporary Stop Notice was served immediately. Planning Enforcement Notices were served about a week later. An appeal was lodged against the Notices which was heard at a public inquiry in March 2008. The Inspector's decision granted the site temporary permission for 3 years (ends March 2011) until an alternative and appropriate site was found pending the need identified in the GTAA. A retrospective planning application for a 3-year temporary permission has also been submitted by the occupiers of the site in order to address technical issues of the site. See the previous chapter for details of the site. This site has permission for 11 pitches; however, to the best of the knowledge of the research team, just 7 pitches are occupied.
- 7.4 No other planning application for a site was recorded in the Study Area.

### **Unauthorised development of Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites**

- 7.5 There were no unauthorised developments in the Study Area.
- 7.6 Although there were no unauthorised developments at the time of the Study we were able to find a number of households who were occupying the rear gardens of friends or family in bricks and mortar housing. These could more accurately be termed '**irregular unauthorised developments**'; this could also be the case for those households classified as 'other' who were

households who at the time of the research were staying on the driveways of bricks and mortar friends/family (see Chapter 2). These are highlighted separately due to differences in the households' expected length of stay.

- 7.7 In terms of the households staying in the **gardens of bricks and mortar dwellings**:
- All had been there for a very short time (1–2 weeks)
  - All expected to move on in the next week
  - All reportedly were moving to a 'new' or 'next' stopping place but it was unclear where this was going to be.
- 7.8 When asked why they were moving, one respondent commented, "*Because I don't want to get my sister in trouble*".
- 7.9 In terms of the two households who were staying on the **driveways of friends/families' bricks and mortar dwellings** (both in Gateshead):
- Both households had been on the driveways for a long time; one for between 6 and 12 months, the other for between 1 and 3 years.
  - Both households reported that they were looking for somewhere authorised in the local area.

## Planning issues

- 7.10 Local authority officers were asked if they could volunteer an example of good practice in relation to their planning approach to engagement with Gypsies and Travellers, or suggest ways forward. Only Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland mentioned examples, where it was stated that the authorities had a track record in Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople on LDF documents. For the remaining authorities, providing no examples of good practice is not the same as saying the authorities currently engage in 'poor' planning practice.
- 7.11 We were also keen to explore, with Gypsies and Travellers, their experience of buying land and/or going through the planning process.
- 7.12 We asked all respondents if they had ever purchased their own land; a total of 13 respondents had. Of these 11 respondents applied for planning permission – only 6 of which was before they developed the land (i.e. 5 applications were retrospective).
- 7.13 We asked respondents to elaborate on their experiences of the planning system in order to gain some insight into the process from their perspective. A number of the responses talked about how their application was **refused**:

*"I applied for planning permission but it was rejected as it was Greenbelt so I sold it on."*

- 7.14 Other respondents talked about how **difficult** the application procedure had been:

*“This has been passed for 3 years. It took a lot of time to get it passed. We had to go to loads of meetings to sort it all out.”*

*“With a right load of hard work we finally got it passed.”*

- 7.15 The **precedent** of neighbouring yards played a big part in one application for a Travelling Showperson:

*“Because there’re about 10–12 other yards here I didn’t have any problems getting planning permission; it was straight forward really.”*

- 7.16 Other people talked about the **negotiation** that they entered into in order to achieve a positive decision:

*“The planning officials came to visit us, they were satisfied with the proposals, one concern was around the blocking or preventing locals from accessing the industrial estate, but we worked through it. It was a good result for us and the planning officers.”*

*“It was refused at first because we didn’t have public access to the main road, we appealed and bought the land for public access. The awareness of us as a cultural minority made all the difference.”*

## 8. Unauthorised encampments: Findings

- 8.1 The presence and incidence of unauthorised encampments is a significant issue impacting upon local authorities, landowners, Gypsies and Travellers, the settled population and the public purse. Unauthorised developments are often cited as a major source tension; unauthorised encampments are often the type of accommodation which has become synonymous with Gypsies and Travellers and is often a further source of tension with the wider community.
- 8.2 Due to the nature of unauthorised encampments (i.e. unpredictability, seasonal fluctuations etc.), it is very difficult to grasp a comprehensive picture of need for residential and/or transit accommodation without considering a range of interconnected issues.

### Policies on managing unauthorised encampments

- 8.3 Three of the local authorities have a **written policy** for managing unauthorised camping by Gypsies and Travellers. Gateshead and South Tyneside have a written policy. Sunderland has an extremely comprehensive policy and procedure which includes provision for joint working and case conferences when eviction is being considered. Newcastle and North Tyneside do not have a written policy.
- 8.4 Authorities are currently party to **joint agreements** or protocols with other agencies for managing unauthorised encampments as follows:

Gateshead	Police and other agencies
Newcastle	No formal arrangements
North Tyneside	Police
South Tyneside	Police, other LAs and other agencies
Sunderland	Other agencies

- 8.5 **First contact** with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments is normally made by:

Gateshead	Council officer or police
Newcastle	Council officer
North Tyneside	Council officer or police
South Tyneside	Council officer
Sunderland	Council officer

- 8.6 In all areas council officers are normally involved in the first contact. No authority uses a bailiff as the first contact on an unauthorised encampment.

## Good Practice on Managing Unauthorised Encampments

8.7 Good practice was reported by four local authorities as follows:

**Gateshead:** the Private Sector Housing Team, in a joint initiative with Northumbria Police, visit all unauthorised encampments on Council-owned land within the Borough of Gateshead as soon as is practical after becoming aware of their location, and with a target of 24 hours. The purpose of the visit is to establish whether the site is in a location suitable for short-term occupation. If it is, it will be tolerated, provided a code of conduct is observed and also to establish if there are welfare or other needs. A copy of the Code of Conduct is issued, with consideration given to language or other communication difficulties. An information pack is also issued that provides contact details for Health, Education, Social, Housing and Environmental Health Services. Advice regarding other local services is also provided. When sites are on privately owned land the owners are contacted within 24 hours and advised regarding the options available to them.

**North Tyneside:** reporting practices with the Police.

**South Tyneside:** this is demonstrated by a method that involves talking to and liaising with Gypsies and Travellers of unauthorised encampments. This is to establish their purpose for arriving in the Borough, ensuring that the relevant assessments are carried out and to ascertain if they require any assistance from the Council. Furthermore the negotiation of an agreed leaving date from unauthorised sites is the preferred option to the use of legal powers.

**Sunderland:** we speak to Gypsies and Travellers on their arrival and assess their needs. Refuse bags are left and collected daily and this minimises waste. Our Children's Service visit alongside Health to assess if there are any educational or medical needs. If medical assistance is needed prior to health visiting, doctors' surgeries are identified in the area where the Gypsy or Traveller is camping.

## Geographical patterns and incidence of unauthorised encampments

8.8 All authorities keep a log of all known unauthorised encampments. Table 17 below shows the number of encampments experienced in the years 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Table 17: Number of Unauthorised Encampments 2005–2007

Area	2005	2006	2007	Average
Gateshead	23	13	19	18
Newcastle	4	6	2	4
North Tyneside	10	9	9	9
South Tyneside	3	4	3	3
Sunderland	6–10	6–10	19	11

- 8.9 Gateshead experienced the highest number of unauthorised encampments over the period, followed by Sunderland. Sunderland said that there were usually 2 encampments in the area, and Gateshead that there was usually 1. Other areas said there was usually no encampment.
- 8.10 Details of location, number of caravans, duration and action taken for encampments during 2006 were provided by authorities other than Sunderland; information is analysed below for 30 encampments in these authorities. Sunderland provided broadly comparable information for 2007 which is reported separately.
- 8.11 In authorities other than Sunderland in 2006, the number of caravans was given for 24 encampments. The average size was just under 11 caravans (range 1 to 40). Encampments varied in size: 8 (33%) had 1–4 caravans; 9 (38%) had between 5 and 10 caravans; and 7 (29%) had more than 10 caravans. There was little variation in average size by local authority. In 2007 in Sunderland, encampment size is known for 17 encampments. The average size was just over 7 caravans. Six encampments (35%) included up to 4 caravans, 7 (41%) had between 5 and 10 caravans and 4 (24%) had more than 10.
- 8.12 In 2006, the duration was given for only 21 encampments (in Gateshead, Newcastle and North Tyneside). The range was from 1 day to 8 weeks (Gateshead), and the average was 12 days. Encampments in Newcastle lasted a shorter time on average (just under 1 week) than in Gateshead and North Tyneside (just under 2 weeks). In Sunderland in 2007, duration is given for 16 encampments and the average was 6 days. These figures exclude an encampment of 2 caravettes which started in August 2007 and was ongoing at the time of the research.
- 8.13 Several of the locations involved appear to be industrial estates or car parks. The same locations appear more than once with repeat encampments in all areas including Sunderland.
- 8.14 In answer to more general questions, local authority officers said that:
- Gateshead, Newcastle and Sunderland experience more encampments in summer; North and South Tyneside note no clear variation over the year.
  - Most families involved in unauthorised encampments are said to be ‘in transit’ in all areas.

- Horses on unauthorised encampments are very rare in Gateshead and Sunderland (one encampment a year), Newcastle and North Tyneside. Some encampments involve horses in South Tyneside.
- South Tyneside reported that unauthorised encampments occur in the Hebburn area of the Borough, particularly in the south-eastern parts.

## Trends in Unauthorised Encampments

- 8.15 Authorities were asked how the number of unauthorised encampments has changed over the past 5 years. Overall numbers had decreased in Newcastle, increased in Sunderland and remained broadly the same in other areas.
- 8.16 In terms of size of group, most said that encampments had remained broadly the same over the past 5 years (Newcastle and North and South Tyneside). Size was said to have increased in Sunderland and decreased in Gateshead.
- 8.17 Other comments on local patterns and/or changes over time noted are:
- **Gateshead:** there has been a large reduction in the availability of sites used traditionally.
  - **North Tyneside:** sites on private land now appear to be on industrial estates, often on forecourt areas of units, or derelict industrial sites. In the past they were often on fields used for car boot sales or private roads.
  - **South Tyneside:** encampments tend to occur in the same areas of South Tyneside when they take place.
  - **Sunderland:** unauthorised encampments are generally in the Washington area, often on grass verges or on pieces of green land. These are also often in industrial estates. Most groups are from the same family.
- 8.18 When asked how they expect the number of encampments to change over the next 5 years, Gateshead expected a decrease. Other authorities either did not know (Newcastle and Sunderland) or expected no significant change (North and South Tyneside).
- 8.19 It should be noted that areas of the Study Area are situated in close proximity to areas that have regular annual horse fairs; these are major draws for Gypsies and Travellers from all over the country. Such events may impact on the levels of unauthorised camping in the area at particular times.
- Appleby Horse Fair in Cumbria runs in early June and is the largest horse fair of its kind. Large groups of Gypsies and Travellers travel to and from the event in late May through to the end of June.

- Seaham Horse Fair in east Durham runs in late August. This event is a more recent event than Appleby but attracts a significant number of visitors over the Bank Holiday period.
- Yarm Fair in Stockton-on-Tees runs on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the third week in October. This was once a commercial fair predominantly for cheese, horse and livestock sales. There is now a fun fair in the High Street but Gypsy and Travellers' horses are still run up and down the High Street on Saturday morning to display those for sale (a practice called the 'Riding of the Fair').

8.20 It was also felt that Town Moor Fun Fair and Gosforth Races in Newcastle also acted as a pull for a number of caravans to remain on unauthorised encampments.

***Living on unauthorised encampments – views from Gypsies and Travellers***

8.21 As mentioned previously, a total of 21 households on unauthorised encampments were interviewed. The majority of respondents on encampments were Irish Travellers (15 respondents/71%). Five respondents (24%) described themselves as Scottish Gypsy, with one respondent preferring the more generic 'Traveller'.

8.22 All households interviewed on unauthorised encampments provided details about how many living units they had: fourteen households had 1 trailer; six households had 2 trailers; and one household had 3 trailers. The average number of living units was 1.4 trailers per household.

8.23 When the average household size for encampments (4.4) is divided by the average number of trailers households possess, this provides us with an average of 3 people per trailer on unauthorised encampments.

8.24 In terms of space their accommodation provided, all but one respondent felt that their trailers provided them with enough space. A lack of space in this one instance was attributed to needing more or larger living units.

8.25 The majority of those interviewed had been on the encampment for a short period of time. Eleven (52%) had been there for less than 1 week, two respondents had been there for between 2 weeks and one month, two respondents for between 1 month and 3 months and the remainder for up to 6 months. Four respondents could not provide an answer to the question.

8.26 In terms of previous accommodation/sites the vast majority (70%) of households had been on other unauthorised encampments prior to the site upon which they were interviewed, 5% had stayed on a caravan park and 25% had been accommodated in bricks and mortar housing.

- 8.27 With regard to how long they anticipated staying on the encampment, 6 respondents (30%) intended staying for up to 1 week, two (10%) said they would stay for between 2 and 4 weeks, and the remaining respondents (60%) did not know. Respondents were asked to elaborate on why they would be leaving the encampment. Eight respondents indicated that they would be leaving due to eviction, rather than leaving of their own volition. Only one other respondent could provide an answer to the question and they said they were travelling on to Appleby Fair.
- 8.28 When asked if they would like to stay in this area (i.e. the local authority area where the interview took place), 6 respondents (29%) indicated that they would like to stay in the area (2 preferred to stay in Newcastle; the remainder wanted to stay in Gateshead); while 2 households (10%) wanted to leave the area – to return to ‘*the South*’ and ‘*Ireland*’ respectively. The remainder did not know what they would do.<sup>33</sup> The respondents who wanted to stay in the area were all looking for some form of permanent residential accommodation (either a private or socially rented site).
- 8.29 Three respondents (14%) reported having a base elsewhere and two had a house, with the remaining household having a pitch on a private transit site. All three bases were either in the London area or in Northern Ireland. A total of eighteen people did not have an alternative base. The discrepancy between the people without a base and those who wanted to remain in the area may suggest that around twelve of the respondents (57%) wanted to retain a travelling way of life.
- 8.30 For those households currently living on unauthorised encampments, access to most of the very basic facilities was a major issue (see Table 18 below). Most of the respondents talked about relying on garages, service stations and supermarkets to meet their needs. The following comments are representative of views from households on unauthorised encampments with regard to accessing basic services:

*“We fill our drums at the local garage for water and use the toilets at the garage and shops”*

*“We go to the petrol station for water and we’ve got a generator for electric”*

*“We’ve got to burn the rubbish; it needs collecting really. We get the water from the garage. The main problem is not having hot water and it would be handy if we had toilets”*

*“Tend to use the local facilities at shops and garages”*

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<sup>33</sup> An error in the routing of the questionnaire may have skewed upwards the people’s reported preferences for remaining in the area.

Table 18: Access to basic facilities on unauthorised encampments

Type of facility	Have access? (%)
Electricity supply	86
WC/Toilet	29
Water	24
Showers	24
Waste disposal/collection	19

Base: 21 respondents providing information

- 8.31 From our experience in other areas it is unusual to find households that can access some form of waste disposal/collection (although it is unclear from the questionnaire whether that disposal equated to burning). From consultations undertaken as part of this study, as well as reports in various newspapers across the country, waste disposal is repeatedly reported as one of the main areas of tension with the settled community, as Gypsies and Travellers in many villages, towns and local areas become synonymous with fly-tipping. However, as many Gypsies and Travellers use vans as their means of transport, their access to local authority recycling centres is restricted by the exclusion of 'business' disposals, unless a charge is paid. Although some Gypsies and Travellers do discard such waste on land which they have used/encamped upon, it has also been known for non-Gypsies and Travellers to use such sites as fly-tipping areas in order to deflect blame from themselves to transient Gypsies and Travellers.

## 9. Gypsies and Travellers in social and private bricks and mortar accommodation: Findings

- 9.1 The numbers of Gypsies and Travellers currently accommodated within bricks and mortar accommodation are unknown, but potentially large. Movement to and from housing is a major concern for the strategic approach, policies and working practices of local authorities. One of the main issues of the consultation revolved around the role that housing services do, should and could play in the accommodation of Gypsies and Travellers within the Study Area.
- 9.2 This chapter looks at the information held by the authorities around Gypsies and Travellers and housing and looks at the approaches these authorities take.

### Housing policies

- 9.3 Authorities were asked whether specific reference is made to Gypsies and Travellers in various housing strategies:

**Current housing strategy:** All authorities said specific reference is made to Gypsies and Travellers.

**Current homelessness strategy:** Gypsies and Travellers are specifically referred to in Gateshead, Newcastle, South Tyneside and Sunderland, but not in North Tyneside.

**Current BME housing strategy:** Newcastle has a BME strategy in development which mentions Gypsies and Travellers.

Gypsies and Travellers are identified in **ethnic records and monitoring** of social housing applications and/or allocations only in Newcastle.

- 9.4 **Gateshead Housing Strategy 2007–2012** under 'Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers, Faith Groups and BME Communities' identifies the following actions:
- Research the needs of Gypsies and Travellers
  - Provide suitable accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers
- 9.5 The Homelessness Strategy Update 2007 also refers to the changed procedures in relation to unauthorised encampments, and notes the intention to identify pitch requirements for Gypsies and Travellers within the Housing Strategy and Regional Spatial Strategy following the housing needs survey.
- 9.6 The needs of Gypsies and Travellers have also been explored, to a certain extent, by a Housing Needs and Social Care Survey published in 2006. The Private Housing Renewal Strategy also mentions issues related to the Gypsy and Traveller population.

- 9.7 **Newcastle's Housing Strategy 2006–2021 (*Homes for a sustainable future*)** states that, '*It is important that we address the housing requirements of Gypsy and Traveller communities*'. It notes the regional research into requirements and says '*we will ensure that outcomes relevant to Newcastle will be taken forward as part of the implementation of this strategy*'.
- 9.8 Newcastle's Homelessness Strategy and Review 2008 also include reference to Gypsies or Travellers.
- 9.9 **The North Tyneside Housing Strategy 2006–2010** commits to working through the Tyne and Wear Housing Partnership and the Regional Housing Unit to jointly assess and address the housing and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the City Region.
- 9.10 **South Tyneside Housing Strategy 2008–2012** refers to the need to undertake sub-regional research on Gypsy and Traveller needs. An action within the Action Plan refers to the need to carry out a sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment.
- 9.11 **The Sunderland Housing Strategy 2006–2011** includes a reference to carrying out a needs assessment for Gypsies and Travellers under Priority 8 Improving the way we deal with vulnerable people. This is reflected in the Action Plan. The Homelessness Review currently in draft form will again refer to the needs assessment.

## **Homelessness policies in relation to Gypsies and Travellers**

- 9.12 Authorities were asked to provide details of how homeless Gypsies and Travellers are supported through the homelessness process, and any steps taken to provide Gypsies and Travellers with housing advice and assistance. Authorities normally reported on arrangements in place to support all homeless applicants. More specific additional services were noted by two authorities:

**South Tyneside:** The Council's centralised Housing Options Team has been operational since April 2005. To date there have been no homelessness presentations from Gypsies or Travellers. Should Travellers or Gypsies apply as homeless and temporary accommodation become an issue, the assistance of Culture and Leisure Services would be sought if needed as they manage the caravan sites in the Borough. All applicants are offered a confidential in-depth interview with help given should literacy or language be a barrier. Gypsies and Travellers feature in the Homelessness Strategy 2008–2013 in the form of the Council's engagement in research to explore Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs.

**Sunderland:** In line with diversity and equality, we would provide the same services and follow procedures and policies we have in place. If additional support was required we would provide this or involve appropriate services where required with consent and involvement of customers.

## **Gypsies and Travellers in Social Housing**

- 9.13 Within the survey of authorities there was a sequence of questions about Gypsies and Travellers in social housing and among applicants and allocations. Most authorities were unable to provide any information:
- Only Newcastle was able to give the number of Gypsies and Travellers currently registered for social housing. In this case there are no Gypsies and Travellers registered.
  - Only Newcastle was able to say how many Gypsies and Travellers were housed in 2006. Again, the answer was zero.
  - No homelessness presentations had been made by Gypsies and Travellers in the previous 12 months in Newcastle or South Tyneside. Other authorities were unable to say.
  - No authority was able to say whether/how the number of Gypsies and Travellers moving into social rented housing had changed over the past 5 years. Most were also unable to say how numbers might change in the future – only Sunderland expected numbers to remain broadly the same.
- 9.14 Two authorities commented on the main reasons why Gypsies and Travellers move into housing (from a list of 8 potential reasons). In order of significance these were:
- Want to 'settle': Gateshead and South Tyneside
  - For children's schooling: South Tyneside
- 9.15 Authorities were asked to estimate how many Gypsies and Travellers live in social housing in their area – no authority was able to do so.

## **Gypsies and Travellers in Private Housing**

- 9.16 Answers from the local authorities to questions about Gypsies and Travellers in other forms of housing were almost entirely uninformative:
- Only Newcastle noted significant numbers of Gypsies and Travellers in private housing. This relates to concentrations of the Czech Roma community in private rented housing in Benwell. This was identified in the *Bridging Newcastle Gateshead* report.

- Only Newcastle noted any issues arising in relation to Gypsies and Travellers living in private housing in their area. This relates to the Czech Roma community and issues of rights and responsibilities in private rented accommodation.
- All authorities either said that Gypsies and Travellers do not live on caravan or mobile home parks not specifically designed for them in their area or had no information on the subject.

## **Estimating the size of Gypsy and Traveller population in bricks and mortar housing**

- 9.17 Neither the local authority officers nor members of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities in the area were able to accurately estimate the size of the Gypsy and Traveller population in bricks and mortar housing in the five boroughs. Officers from the various Traveller Education Services could not estimate how many Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation they were.
- 9.18 In the absence of evidence as to the numbers in housing we base the estimate of the population on the number of interviews with bricks and mortar-based households we secured. Therefore, as a conservative estimate, we assume we have interviewed 50% of the actual bricks and mortar-based population. The Commission for Racial Equality's 2006 report, *Common Ground: Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*, suggested that the housed populations was around 3 times the number of trailer-based populations (see section 1.2). Therefore, by doubling the number of interviews attained (albeit arbitrarily) we posit that there are at least:
- Gateshead 22 households
  - Newcastle 42 households
  - N Tyneside 12 households
  - S Tyneside 8 households
  - Sunderland 16 households
- 9.19 This suggests that there are at least 100 bricks and mortar-based households within the Study Area. It should be noted that we believe that this is likely to be an understatement of the actual housed population.

### ***Living in bricks and mortar housing – views from Gypsies and Travellers***

- 9.20 Among the 50 respondents whom we consulted who lived in bricks and mortar accommodation, 37 (74%) lived in a house; 12 (24%) lived in a bungalow; and 1 (2%) lived in a flat/maisonette.
- 9.21 In total, 38% of bricks and mortar dwellers were owner-occupiers; 30% were council tenants; 30% were private tenants; and 2% were tenants of an RSL.

9.22 A total of 42% of households were in the Council Tax A band; the remainder of the sample did not know.

9.23 In terms of the size of the dwelling:

- 2% had 1 bedroom;
- 38% had 2 bedrooms;
- 58% had 3 bedrooms; and,
- 2% (1 household) had 4 or more bedrooms.

9.24 All but 6 respondents (13%) thought that their property gave them enough space. The respondents who commented on needing more space raised concerns about how their household was changing, due to marriage of older children and the general size of their families:

*“We’ve recently had twins. My eldest son lives in a trailer on the driveway at the moment”*

*“My eldest son and new daughter-in-law are living on the driveway at the minute”*

*“We’ve got 7 children and 2 adults. There’s 9 of us in a 3 bed house!”*

*“There’s 6 children, myself and my wife in a 3 bed house – we need more room”*

9.25 In total, 35 households (70%) in bricks and mortar accommodation still owned trailers. The majority of households (33 respondents) had just 1 trailer; and 2 respondents had 2 trailers. The respondents stored their trailers in a variety of ways including on the driveway/garden of their accommodation; with family and friends on private sites; in storage; and on a local farmer’s property.

9.26 Residents in bricks and mortar accommodation were asked, on a five-point scale from very good to very poor, what they thought about a number of aspects of their accommodation including: size of house; design of house; neighbours; location; facilities; and condition/state of repair. The majority of respondents on the sites viewed these issues either positively or, in a few cases, ambivalently. Respondents were particularly happy about the facilities and the condition of the house. ‘Neighbours’ was the issue which generated the most ambivalence from respondents, but only marginally.

Table 19: Views on the house (in %)

Issue	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor
Size of house	20	60	14	6	-
Design of house	18	60	20	2	-
Neighbours	10	64	22	2	2
Location	16	66	14	4	-
Facilities	18	64	16	2	-
Condition/state of repair	20	60	18	2	-
Children’s play facilities	12	64	14	8	2

Base: 50 respondents providing information

- 9.27 All respondents had access to all basic facilities we enquired about, with the exception of 4 respondents who did not have a bath and 5 respondents who did not have a shower. Four respondents commented that they did not have access to somewhere safe for their children to play.
- 9.28 Most respondents had lived in their accommodation for a significant period of time: 14% for 5 years or more; 46% had been there for between 1 and 5 years; 22% had been there for between 6 and 12 months; with the remainder (16%/8 households) there for between 1 month and 6. One respondent (2%) did not know how long they had been living in their accommodation.
- 9.29 Generally speaking, when asked how long they were likely to remain in their house, the vast majority said they did not know (65%); 19% thought they would remain indefinitely; and 17% were planning to leave within the next 12 months. When asked their reasons for leaving, two respondents commented how they wanted to move back to trailer-based living:

*"I don't like it, my children deserve more"*

*"Houses just don't suit us; we're just waiting for a site to become available somewhere"*

- 9.30 Other people simply spoke about how they needed a bigger property:

*"We desperately need a bigger place"*

*"Would like somewhere quieter for my children"*

*"Need more space for the cars outside"*

- 9.31 We asked all Gypsies and Travellers about their experience of living in bricks and mortar accommodation. A total of 26 households (19% of the overall sample) had experience of bricks and mortar housing. If we remove the households who are now in bricks and mortar housing from this, this indicates that 6% of the Gypsy and Traveller sample (8 households) had been in bricks and mortar accommodation at some time in the past, but had since left. This is particularly interesting as 7 out of the 8 households who are currently living on unauthorised encampments have had experience of bricks and mortar living.
- 9.32 These 8 households came from a mixture of tenures including council properties, privately rented properties and houses they owned themselves. Half of the people commented that they moved into housing with their family when they were younger, with the other half citing 'health reasons' and a 'lack of sites' for moving into bricks and mortar housing at some point in the past.
- 9.33 As many people left bricks and mortar accommodation, we were keen to ascertain people's views and experiences of living in houses, flats, etc. and why they had left. We asked people on a five-point scale, very good to very poor, to rate their experience. A number of people (25%) thought that living in

a house was either a very poor or a poor experience; 13% had indifferent views; and the remainder (62%) thought that living in bricks and mortar accommodation was either a very good or good experience.

- 9.34 Due to the number of households who had left bricks and mortar housing in the past, of particular interest was the reasons given for leaving this accommodation. There were a whole range of different responses, perhaps reflecting some of the difficulties faced by Gypsies and Travellers in adjusting to a different way of living. We received a number of comments which tended to provide an indication that for some people travelling was a major pull:

*“I got itchy feet.”*

*“Wanted to be back out travelling.”*

- 9.35 One respondent talked about how the lack of space in the family home meant that they had to move into trailers.

- 9.36 Equally we also received some comments from respondents who rated their experience of living in a house positively:

*“We enjoy it; we’re a happy family.”*

*“I liked having the facilities.”*

- 9.37 Out of all the people who had previously lived in a house, 28% (10 respondents) would consider doing so again. We asked respondents what the main reasons would be for considering living in bricks and mortar accommodation. The top 4 reasons were: a lack of sites, stability, health reasons and children’s education.

- 9.38 Two respondents, who were currently in bricks and mortar accommodation already, were on a waiting list for a house with their local council. The two respondents concerned were waiting for houses in Newcastle and North Tyneside.

## 10. Housing-related support service and general services: Findings

- 10.1 The questionnaire to local authority officers also sought to ascertain and collate the recognition of Gypsies and Travellers in relation to housing-related support services – many of which come under the umbrella of the Supporting People programme.
- 10.2 Each of the 5 authorities has a Supporting People Five Year Strategy and all mention Travellers. Reference is commonly made to the lack of services provided specifically for Travellers and lack of information about evidence of need for services for the group. Actions refer to research on needs and joint working in both assessing and meeting needs. North Tyneside has the fullest coverage and reaches three objectives:
- To research the local needs for this client group.
  - To co-ordinate needs information from other neighbouring local authorities to gain a regional picture of service provision.
  - To ensure that services primarily for other client groups (particularly floating support advice services) demonstrate a clear understanding of the specific needs and preferences of Travellers.
- 10.3 No housing-related support services currently provided for Gypsies and Travellers were reported. In Gateshead, Gypsies and Travellers are identified as a potential need group in the Supporting People Five Year Strategy.
- 10.4 When asked which services Gypsies and Travellers most frequently approach the Council about (with a list of general housing-related support categories provided), most respondents from the local authorities did not specify or stated that they did not know. Gateshead posited Housing Benefit being the key service inquiry.

### ***Views from Gypsies and Travellers on housing-related support services***

- 10.5 It proved extremely difficult to find a suitable method to gain some idea as to the level of experience/need within the Gypsy and Traveller community for housing-related services. The very concept of an outside agency providing services such as support for settling into new accommodation or childcare was often seen as nonsensical because of the reliance upon strong family networks and the support that the extended family have historically provided within Gypsy and Traveller communities. However, we were keen to attempt to gain some idea about the levels of need for a number of services. We consulted with key stakeholders and reviewed key documents<sup>34</sup> from elsewhere to produce a list of the kind of services to gain views on.

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<sup>34</sup> See Supporting People Eastern Regional Cross Authority Group – Gypsy and Traveller Conference, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2005 <http://www.spkweb.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6DA547AB-FCBB-4B4F-AE12-A5DD282B4C34/7895/FinalReportofGypsyandtravellerWorkshopApril2006.doc> and The Housing Support Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire and York, December 2006, <http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/council/consultations/engage/downloaddoc.jsp?id=941>

10.6 We asked all Gypsy and Traveller (including Travelling Showpeople) respondents to comment on the likelihood of using a number of services on a scale which covered; 'would never use', 'might use', 'would definitely use' and 'don't know' (see Table 20).

Table 20: Likelihood of using housing-related support services (in %)

Support need	Would never use	Might use	Would definitely use	Don't know
Finding accommodation	31	15	29	17
Settling into new accommodation	44	20	14	19
Budgeting	77	5	2	14
Meeting people	73	7	1	14
Accessing a GP	33	20	37	7
Accessing legal services	30	29	18	24
Harassment	29	27	15	27
Claiming benefits	69	15	10	4
Finding a job	88	7	2	1
Accessing training (for adults)	87	7	3	1
Pregnancy	52	25	8	12
Parenting	91	2	2	3
Filling in forms	26	44	18	12
Support with planning	7	28	42	21

Base: 139 respondents providing information

10.7 As can be seen, the majority of respondents were not interested in receiving support with many of the services highlighted above. This might be explained by a general perception from respondents that many are not applicable to Gypsies and Travellers; therefore, these findings cannot be seen to provide an illustration as to the definitive need for such services. However, the results do seem to indicate where the current main concerns about service areas are. The services which elicited most interest were (in order of interest): support with planning, filling in forms, accessing a GP, accessing legal services, harassment and finding accommodation.

10.8 We asked respondents if they felt that they had ever experienced harassment or discrimination in the Study Area because they were a Gypsy or a Traveller – 15% of respondents thought that they had. These respondents were mostly caravan based. Around a quarter of people interviewed on the unauthorised encampments reported harassment. Just 6% of households in bricks and mortar reported harassment. Many people responded by simply saying they had been called names in the local area. We asked people to expand on the nature of the discrimination/harassment and we received a variety of responses and experiences including:

*“Yes had it a couple of times. Lived behind high rise flats and the kids and community came over to the caravans and threw oranges, apples, stones at us, we had to call the police”*

*“It’s everywhere, called gypos. We all get tarred with the same brush. Had stones fired at us when travelling and we often have to shift in the middle of the night to get away”*

*“Locals calling us the usual - 'dirty', 'gypos', 'scum”*

*“The next door neighbours’ are pure racists.”*

*“Got stoned at at one camp in the night. A lot of lies were told about us when we first moved here and I think it were the fly-tippers blaming us”*

## Access to local services and amenities

- 10.9 In order to gain some idea as to the interaction that the Gypsies and Travellers have with various local services, we asked people if they felt that they or their family had sufficient access to certain services and how important these services were to them (see Table 21). As can be seen, for the most part the services that are most important to people seem to be the ones to which Gypsies and Travellers had access to. It was encouraging to find that the vast majority of respondents reported having access to these services. Access appeared more common for Travelling Showpeople populations however, than other Gypsy and Traveller groups.

Table 21: Access to services and importance of service

Service	Have access (%)	Very important (%)	Quite important (%)	Not so important (%)	Not important at all (%)	Don't know (%)
A&E	91	76	21	-	-	2
Local Shops	88	71	22	2	-	2
Post Office	87	42	26	19	4	7
Banks	86	42	18	27	6	6
GP/Health Centre	83	71	19	1	-	8
Public Transport	82	26	5	26	34	8
Dentist	81	65	20	2	1	11
Maternity Care	71	15	18	8	35	23
Sports and Leisure Facilities	64	19	8	20	21	29
Nursery Schools and Children's Services	50	12	2	11	26	47
Health Visitor	42	13	2	-	28	55
Services for Older People	35	15	2	11	15	59
Youth Clubs	35	8	2	4	26	59
Social Worker	35	3	1	2	28	59

Base: 139 respondents providing information

10.10 We also asked whether people who worked in the local authority, health service, education and other services should be more aware of issues affecting Gypsies and Travellers. A quarter of respondents (25%) felt that more awareness was required. When asked to expand on their views the majority of people spoke about the need to treat Gypsies and Travellers equally:

*“A lot of them don't know about Travellers. The school has arranged for them to come down and see us and learn a bit more about us.”*

*“Everyone should be treated as equals, no-one is any better than another. We are all the same.”*

*“People don't understand us, we are human like everyone else, but they don't give us a chance. Once they know who you are they want to move away from you.”*

*“The Councils should be more lenient with the Travellers when they put in for planning for sites and not just listen to the racist locals and objections.”*

*“You meet some people that couldn't help you anymore than they do and then others don't give you the time of day.”*

## 11. Employment, education, health and policing: Findings

- 11.1 This section presents findings relating to Gypsies and Travellers in the service areas of employment, education, health and policing. Because of their different needs and the experiences of certain services, findings relating to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be highlighted separately.

### Employment

- 11.2 For this section the survey started with a general question about the kind of work undertaken by respondents and their families. Answers were extremely varied with the most popular broad areas being ground-working, gardening/ tree work, landscaping, carpet related trades, uPVC and guttering, roofing and tarmac. It was clear that many of these trades were practical and manual and it was not uncommon to find families engaged in multiple trades. Travelling Showpeople of course referred to working in fairs and shows as their main occupation
- 11.3 We also asked how many people were self-employed and employed in the households. All working people were self-employed – no one worked for an employer unless that employer was a close family member. Clearly self-employment is a major mode of employment for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 11.4 No one who currently travelled felt that travelling (or being moved on) had an impact on their work. People tended to respond by saying “*that’s all part of the life*”.
- 11.5 The survey also asked whether or not households had any particular ‘site needs’ in relation to their work (i.e. the storage of equipment, etc.). Just 6 households said they did for the following reasons:

*“Could always do with a tipping place nearby”*

*“There needs to be enough room for the pick ups we all have”*

*“Really need somewhere to recycle tree waste”*

- 11.6 In terms of training for work, 21% of Gypsies and Travellers had been on some form of training which was, in all cases, informal in nature and provided through friends, family and social networks. No one reported taking part in formal training for work in college. Two Gypsy and Traveller respondents wanted to take part in training at some point in the future – both of these respondents were women expressing interests in care work, either with older people or children.

*“I’m currently learning to read and write with TES. Once I learn I would like to do something. I like working with the elderly and I’m good with children”*

- 11.7 In total, 44% of Travelling Showpeople reported having attended formal college education with a further 32% wanting more formal training in the future. Travelling Showpeople respondents reported wanting more training in a variety of topics including:
- Business studies
  - Information technology
  - Health and safety
  - Engineering
  - Food handling
  - Welding
  - HGV license
- 11.8 We asked each respondent to comment on the level/standard of education that they themselves had obtained. A total of 42 Gypsy and Traveller respondents simply stated “*can read and write*”, 35 respondents simply replied “none”, 3 respondents reported that they can’t read or write, and 2 respondents replied that they ‘earn a living’. In contrast, Travelling Showpeople only had 18 people who reported no educational qualifications with the rest of the sample reporting achievements at O-Level, GCSE or NVQ.

## **Gypsies and Travellers and education**

- 11.9 The workers from Traveller Education Services (TES) provided the fieldwork team with some useful background information as to services in the area, as well as being able to offer their views on the education and related needs and experiences of Gypsies and Travellers in the area.
- 11.10 The general view from the TES workers who we spoke to was that the schools in the area that they worked with handled the issues very positively and are seen to be ‘welcoming’ to Gypsy and Traveller children. In terms of the TES workers in Sunderland the vast majority of their work involved working with the Travelling Showpeople population and supporting their children through education whilst on the road. The education service in South Tyneside spoke about how children from the Travelling Showpeople site travelled during the work season and that these children settled back into local schools once they returned. Children from the private site in South Tyneside were, due to a combination of choice, familiarity and geography, registered and attending a school within the borough of Gateshead.<sup>35</sup>
- 11.11 A total of 70 households had school-age children (between 5 years and 16 years); 70% of households with school-age children reported that they regularly attend school; 24% received education at home; the remainder reported they did not regularly receive any form of education.

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<sup>35</sup> Although it should be noted that according to a TES worker, the school is only approximately 4 miles from their current accommodation

11.12 In terms of differences in attendance levels, children from bricks and mortar housing, Travelling Showpeople children and most of the children from the local authority site reported regular attendance. Respondents on unauthorised encampments reported the lowest levels of regular attendance with just one household out of fourteen having regularly attending schoolchildren.

11.13 We asked those respondents with school-age children to rate their children's schools. Every respondent viewed the school, or their children's education, positively. We asked respondents to expand on why they had given the rating they had:

*"My children are happy at the school and able to fit into the mainstream when we come back to our yard"*

*"It was easy to get them in. They [the children] are doing very well and they give them work to do when we go away"*

11.14 Everyone who we asked reported it being either easy or very easy to access the schools in their local area when they enrolled their children.

11.15 Travelling Showpeople respondents had more contact with the local Traveller Education Service (TES) than did other Gypsies and Travellers (40% Travelling Showpeople to 18% of other Gypsies/Travellers). All respondents that have contact with the TES thought the service was either very good or good. Similar to local schools, no one viewed the Service negatively – we asked people to expand on what they thought about the service:

*"They do a lot for the children round here. Help a lot in the schools. They help to make teachers aware of what's going on for Travellers"*

*"Two of the teachers came out before the holidays they are quite helpful"*

## **Gypsies and Travellers and health**

11.16 Identifying households where members have particular health needs for special or adapted accommodation is an important component of housing needs surveys. A growing number of studies show that Gypsies and Travellers experience higher levels of health problems than members of the non-travelling population.

11.17 We asked whether respondents had members of their households who experienced some specific conditions (mobility problems, visual impairment, hearing impairments, mental health problems, learning disabilities or communication problems). As can be seen from Table 22, the vast majority of households do not have members with any of these specific conditions. However, a small but significant number of households do have members with these health problems, particularly mobility issues and visual impairments. A total of 11 households reported living with someone who had some sort of

mobility problem. There were also 11 households with some kind of hearing impairment and 7 households with a visual impairment.

Table 22: % households with family members with specific health problems

Type of condition	No one in household	One person in household	Two people in household	Three people in household
Mobility problems	89	11	-	-
Visual impairment	89	8	3	-
Hearing impairment	86	13	1	-
Mental health problems	96	3	1	-
Learning disability	96	4	-	-
Communication problems	96	4	-	-

Base: 136 respondents providing information

- 11.18 A further 32 households (23% of the sample) had someone in their family who experienced some other kind of health problem. Conditions reported included (in most prevalent order) arthritis, asthma, diabetes, heart problems and blood pressure problems. One person mentioned that they were an alcoholic; another person said they were recovering after a work-related accident.

## Gypsies and Travellers and Policing

- 11.19 Respondents were asked about their views on policing in the Study Area. This was phrased as an open question in order to encourage respondents to feel free to discuss a range of issues. A large number of people felt that they could not comment or simply stated for example, that they *'did not know'*, *'never had anything to do with them'*, *'no experiences with police'* or *'no comments'*. Many people thought that they policing was *'good'* or *'ok'*. Few respondents had had negative experiences of the policing in the Study Area. The following comments were provided:

*"They are just the same as anywhere else; they don't trust us"*

*"There are regular patrols in and out of the area"*

*"They keep a tight rein on things to do with our motors"*

*"You can get an awkward policeman and you can get a helpful policeman, it depends"*

## 12. Mobility: Findings

- 12.1 In order to shed some light on the travelling patterns and experiences of Gypsies and Travellers throughout the Study Area, respondents were asked about a range of issues associated with travelling. The travelling of Travelling Showpeople is discussed in Chapter 14.
- 12.2 One of the most important issues to gain some information on was the frequency that households travelled. The vast majority of people reported that they never travelled or travelled seasonally, which generally means for short periods during the summer months. Table 23 breaks this down by accommodation type.

Table 23: Frequency of travelling by current accommodation type

Frequency	Unauthorised encampment (%)	Unauthorised development (%)	Socially rented sites (%)	Private residential sites (%)	Other (%)	Bricks & mortar (%)
Every week	52	50	-	-	-	-
Every month	10	25	-	-	-	4
Every couple of months	14	-	-	-	-	16
Seasonally	5	-	40	100	-	16
Once per year	-	-	-	-	-	2
Never	19	25	60	-	100	62

Base: 85 respondents providing information

- 12.3 Unsurprisingly, unauthorised encampments are the most mobile, followed by people currently stopping on the property of bricks and mortar dwellers. Although households from more secure accommodation (socially rented sites and bricks and mortar housing) still travelled occasionally, the vast majority of these households reported that they no longer travelled. It was unclear what was meant when households on unauthorised encampments reported that they never travelled.
- 12.4 We asked those who said they never travelled to tell us why which resulted in some diverse replies. Some common themes were around being less physically mobile, being too old, general health reasons or that they had sold their trailer. Some female respondents also reported that they were separated from their partners so could no longer travel. Others talked about how they were 'fed up' with being moved on when stopping at the side of the road.
- 12.5 The majority of respondents felt that this was typical (57%) with the remainder commenting that this had changed over the past few years. When asked in what ways this had changed, we received a variety of responses including:

*"We always used to travel but it's not as easy when you're in a house. You've no one to watch your things."*

*“I always used to travel but we’ve recently had twins so we have added another two members to our family.”*

*“You get too much trouble from the police and locals. Also I’ve got kids in school and I want them to have the education I never did.”*

- 12.6 For those who did travel, however, we asked them where they liked to go. This was an open question designed to allow respondents to mention three of the places they visit most frequently. The most common destination seemed to be Scotland followed by areas of the North West (particularly Cumbria and Lancashire), London, Wales, around Gateshead/Newcastle and Ireland. A number of respondents were less specific about where they travelled to with comments such as ‘countryside’, ‘anywhere’, ‘all over’ or ‘anywhere I can get work’. It is difficult to ascertain and quantify a specific travelling pattern from these responses; however, it seems that there was a preference for remaining in the ‘North’ of England, or travelling to Scotland or travelling to London – generally for work.
- 12.7 For those people who still travelled, there was a wide variation in how many caravans/trailers they travelled with from 1 to 10, with most people travelling with between 1 and 5 caravans. The average number of caravans people tended to travel with was around 3.
- 12.8 People tended to travel in significant numbers with a number of respondents travelling with 20–25 people. It was not uncommon for people to travel in groups of more than 10 people.
- 12.9 In total, just over half of the sample had travelled to some extent over the past 12 months. In terms of why they travelled, respondents cited work as the main reason followed by ‘a holiday’ and to ‘visit relatives’. Unlike findings from other GTTAs, very few people reported attending events like horse fairs across the country.
- 12.10 With regard to what type of accommodation people had used while travelling during the last 12 months, by far the most common was pulling up at the ‘roadside’ (both in the countryside and in more urban areas), which as a general rule would indicate unauthorised encampments. The second most common type of accommodation was staying on caravan parks followed by staying with family or relatives on private sites.
- 12.11 Out of the people who had travelled in the last 12-month period, 27% had been forced to leave where they were staying, largely as a result of evictions. Fifteen respondents reported having been forced to move ten times in the last 12-month period. This was largely in other areas of the UK rather than the Study Area.
- 12.12 In order to further understand people’s travelling patterns, we asked everyone where they thought they might travel in the next 12-month period (spring 2008–spring 2009). Interestingly, there was a significant amount of travelling anticipated in areas outside of where they were based now (Table 24).

Households on unauthorised encampments reported that they intended to travel to other parts of the UK as well as within the Study Area.

Table 24: Anticipated areas to travel to over the next 12 months

<b>Travel in the next 12 months?</b>	<b>% of travelling respondents</b>
Within same local area	5
Within the Tyne and Wear area	6
Other parts of the UK	76
Abroad	5

Base: 71 respondents providing information

12.13 In terms of preference for accommodation when travelling, people were asked about the sort of sites/land they would like to use in future (Table 25).

Table 25: Popularity of preferred accommodation

<b>Type preferred accommodation</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Caravan park	68
Roadside	35
With family on private sites	21
With family on socially rented sites	17
Farmers' fields	11
Public/private transit sites	7
Hotels	6
Other	5

Base: 71 respondents providing information

12.14 As Table 25 shows, when travelling, people have a significant preference for staying on mainstream caravan parks rather than other forms of accommodation. This is interesting as this has not been found in other GTAA's. Gypsies and Travellers usually tend to report restricted access to mainstream caravan parks – this is clearly not the case here. Some respondents (5%) reported that they wanted to stay on 'other' types of accommodation which was usually specified as car parks or industrial land. One respondent stated that they would prefer a pitch on a residential site in the next 12 months.

12.15 Around half of respondents (48%) thought that their last 12 months' travelling patterns were likely to remain similar for the foreseeable future. A total of 5 respondents (6%) thought that they would travel less than what they have done in the last 12 months, and 19% thought they would travel more than what they have done in the last 12 months in the foreseeable future – a potential overall increase of 13% in travelling.

## **13. Household formation and accommodation preferences and aspirations**

- 13.1 This chapter looks at a range of issues including the formation of new households and concealment of existing ones and the accommodation preferences and aspirations of the Gypsy and Traveller population. For Travelling Showpeople these issues are addressed in Chapter 14.

### **Household formation**

- 13.2 A total of 5 households (6% of the sample) reported concealed households (i.e. separate households currently in need of accommodation and living with them), which equates to a total of 11 separate households. All of these were family members (mainly older children) of the respondent who required their own accommodation. Two respondents thought that these family members would want to stay in the area and the remaining respondents stated that they didn't know where they would want to live. All of these new households were expected to want to trailer-based accommodation.
- 13.3 Respondents were also asked whether there were people living with them who were likely to want their own separate accommodation in the next five years (2008–2013). A total of 8 households (10% of the sample) said that there were people living with them who would require independent accommodation within the next five-year period. This amounted to 9 separate households. We are confident there was no double counting between these different time periods.
- 13.4 All were thought to want trailer-based accommodation, except some households emerging from bricks and mortar housing where respondents said 'it's up to them'. All of the respondents thought that these households would continue living near where they currently live.

### **Accommodation preferences and aspirations**

- 13.5 The final section of the survey with Gypsies and Travellers looked at some of the ways in which they would like to see accommodation options change and what some of their preferences were around accommodation.

### **Keeping animals and related site needs**

- 13.6 We asked respondents about the types of animals/birds they keep and if they had any issues with regard to keeping them. A total of 24 households told us that they keep dogs, with the majority (87%) owning one dog, and 13% owned two dogs. Most dogs were kept either outside in kennels, on the respondent's pitch or in gardens, or in the house.

- 13.7 A total of 9 respondents informed us that they owned horses and 1 respondent owned chickens. Most respondents had 2 horses and these were kept in a variety of locations, usually farmers' fields but also on their own land or on a family member's land.

### **Long-stay residential sites**

- 13.8 A total of 21 respondents (26% of the sample) said that they would like to move to either a long-stay residential site or a different residential site. Eight of the 21 respondents living on unauthorised encampments were interested in this. A total of 3 households from socially rented sites would consider moving to another site (60% of the sample from socially rented sites). This may indicate some dissatisfaction with this site or simply demonstrate a desire for a change.
- 13.9 We asked all respondents who expressed an interest in long-stay sites how long they would expect to stay on such a site. Half of people thought they would stay on a site for 5 years and over (48%) and the remainder did not know how long they would stay.
- 13.10 We asked all respondents who expressed an interest in moving to a long-term residential site to indicate the area where they would like a site to be. The vast majority (57%) wanted the site within their local area. A total of 56% of unauthorised encampments wanted a site in the area where they were, and 44% of households in bricks and mortar wanted a site in the local area. However, when asked, people also said they would move to a site in another area of Tyne & Wear, the North and other parts of the UK. Respondents stated particular places with Gateshead and Newcastle being the favourites. Other locations included Cramlington, South Shields and Oxfordshire.
- 13.11 When we enquired about views as to the maximum size of a residential site the vast majority of respondents said that a site should not be any larger than 30 pitches, with a significant number of respondents preferring sites around 20 pitches in size. Some respondents who currently lived on unauthorised encampments reported that they would like larger sites – even as large as 40 pitches – which probably reflects the lack of pitches in the area or availability of sites rather than an informed idea of what would work best. It should be noted, however, that this is contrary to government guidance and findings from other GTAAs which tend to indicate that a site of around 20 residential pitches should be the maximum.

### **Transit/short-stay sites**

- 13.12 There was significant demand for an increase in the provision of transit pitches. A total of 28 respondents (35% of the sample) said that they would be interested in stopping at a short-stay or transit private site. This comprised 9 households on unauthorised encampments; 2 households on the driveways/gardens of bricks and mortar houses; 1 household on the socially rented site; 1 household from the private residential site; and 15 households from bricks and mortar accommodation.

- 13.13 We also asked respondents if they would be interested in staying on a short-stay or transit site owned by the council. A total of 21 respondents expressed an interest in this type of transit provision. This comprised 7 households living in bricks and mortar accommodation; 9 households on unauthorised encampments; 2 households from the socially rented site; and 1 household each from the private site and gardens/driveways of houses.
- 13.14 There were similar levels of support across the accommodation types (22 households) for transit pitches to be provided on residential private/socially rented sites.
- 13.15 We also asked respondents whether they would be interested in stopping in designated stopping places. There was overwhelming interest in this, with a total of 68 respondents expressing an interest (84% of the sample). This included 41 households from bricks and mortar accommodation; 4 households from the socially rented site; and 16 households from unauthorised encampments.
- 13.16 We asked all respondents who expressed an interest in staying on short-stay transit sites how long they would expect to stay on such a site. The vast majority of respondents stated a time that was more than 1 week and less than 4 weeks. However, some respondents did say 'as long as we could' but these households were currently on unauthorised encampments and also looking for residential accommodation.
- 13.17 There were mixed views on the preferred size a site should be. A small number of people thought a site should be around 5–10 pitches in size, with a few indicating that 20–30 pitches was the maximum number of pitches for short-stay accommodation. There seemed to be a general consensus, however, that a site containing around 10 pitches would be their preference.
- 13.18 Designated stopping places were the clear favourite, as opposed to more formal transit sites, as methods of short-term accommodation if these were available.

### **Incorporated long-stay and short-stay sites**

- 13.19 We also asked people what their thoughts were about sites that incorporated both long-stay pitches and short-stay pitches. Around a third of respondents (38%) thought it was a good idea, with only 6% viewing it as a bad idea. The remainder of the respondents (56%) did not know whether it was a good or bad idea. We asked people to comment and expand on their answer. Comments in favour of such a site included:

*"It would give Travellers lots of options."*

*"Good idea, Travellers would have facilities."*

*"Travellers would have a choice of when to leave and passers have good facilities."*

*“It would help Travellers on the road. Should have had similar facilities years ago.”*

13.20 More tentative comments included:

*“Sometimes they make them too big and get all different types of Travellers. They should make them for families and friends with transit pitches for people to stay.”*

13.21 Views against such a site included:

*“Because not enough Travellers will look after it. You don't want people coming on and bullying you. The transit site can give the rest of the site a bad name.”*

*“If you're making a site at all it should just be permanent.”*

13.22 Overall, it was clear from the people we spoke to that the majority of respondents were positive about a site with both residential and transit provision. However, it was clear that people did not want to open their residential site up to just anyone and that the use of a more short-stay area should be restricted to the families and friends of residential site residents. Therefore, where short-stay pitches are made available, on residential sites, some control over transit users may be necessary in order to ensure and maintain feelings of safety and cohesion for the more permanent residents.

### **Accommodation preferences**

13.23 We asked all respondents to comment on their preferences for different forms of accommodation:

- A private site owned and lived on by them or their family
- A site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller
- A site owned by the local council
- A family-owned house
- A local authority- or housing association-owned house
- Travelling around and staying on authorised transit sites
- A 'group housing' type site (mixture of transit/residential/chalet/trailer accommodation)

13.24 The answers were ranked on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being the worst option for them and 10 being the best option. The mean (average) answer for each scenario is presented in preference order in Table 26 below. This shows that by far the most preferred form of accommodation is a private site owned either by themselves or their family. This is followed by a site owned by a family-owned house and then by 'group housing'. Both travelling around often, staying on authorised transit sites and living on a council site were viewed reasonably favourably. Living in a local authority or housing association house was regarded as the least favoured option, followed by living on a site owned by a private landlord (not a Gypsy or Traveller) then by living on a site owned by a Gypsy or a Traveller.

Table 26: Views on the type of accommodation preferred<sup>36</sup>

Type of site	Mean answer
A private site owned by them or their family	9.9
A family-owned house	8.4
'Group housing' <sup>37</sup>	7.1
Travelling around on authorised transit sites	6.4
A site owned by the local council <sup>38</sup>	5.5
A site owned by another Gypsy or Traveller	5.3
A site owned by a private landlord (not a Gypsy or Traveller)	5.0
A local authority- or housing association-owned house	3.9

Base: 81 respondents providing information

- 13.25 Of course, one of the dilemmas of attempting to provide a comprehensive assessment of the current and future accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers is that you are only able to assess the needs of those households currently resident in the area. In doing so there is a risk that those households not in the area are excluded from having their needs assessed and preferences presented. These may be households who have traditionally not been welcome or able to stop in the area; such households may be from certain travelling groups i.e. Irish Travellers/New Travellers (the population of Irish Travellers in the Study Area is at quite a low level compared with other GTAA areas) or from certain families from the Romany Gypsy population.

### The best and the worst ...

- 13.26 This final section looks at some of the qualitative information we obtained about the kinds of places people prefer and aspire to live in. We asked all respondents to talk openly about both the best place they had ever lived and the worse place. In terms of the worst place people had lived, we received a variety of responses. Many people talked about how living on the roadside was the worst place for them:

*"In London on the roadsides. They don't give you time to move, they don't care if you have children to feed, they will drag you out."*

*"On a car park in Swansea. It was overcrowded and dirty and the locals wouldn't even give us water from the garage"*

*"In Peterborough on a car park. It was very bad with rats all over the place and the police were bad to us."*

*"The worst place was when we were stopping at the roadside in Kent. It was a horrible place, we pulled into a layby and our caravans got badly stoned by locals and the police didn't even want to know."*

<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that these are the reported views on preferred accommodation by respondents and these preferences may not be able to be met by the land available.

<sup>37</sup> On the questionnaire this was phrased as 'A site incorporating long stay/permanent plots/housing with short stay/transit facilities'.

<sup>38</sup> Although respondents were not specifically asked it may be reasonable to assume that this could include sites provided by registered social landlords.

13.27 Others tended to mention the reaction of the non-Traveller community:

*“Living next door to my neighbours in this house. They are the neighbours from hell. Music till all hours. We are kept up all the time we hear everything they're that loud.”*

*“Was in Liverpool. It was a horrible place, the locals were very racist and they made our lives hell. We never stayed long before they would damage the homes.”*

*“We went over to Ireland for a holiday, it was a lovely place but the people were horrible and racist. We got chased out of one town because of what we are.”*

13.28 Others were more specific about their experiences on particular places:

*Was when we pulled with a few other travellers to Bolan Show, just outside Glasgow. We had trouble with travellers and nearly got arrested.*

*We stayed on a site in Preston, it was very rough and the people very ignorant.*

13.29 Similarly, in terms of the best places people had lived we received a variety of comments – most of which were rather specific about particular places with good facilities or quiet locations:

*“By accident we found a little village in Yorkshire. We was pulled up on a patch of ground for weeks, no one bothered us, we had a lovely summer there.”*

*“The best place I have ever lived was in Skipton, Yorkshire. It was a lovely little place, people were friendly, really welcoming, I enjoyed our week there.”*

*“The best place I have ever lived was on the site in Durham. It was a good site, it was good because I had many friends and we were living like proper Travellers.”*

13.30 From the responses it was clear that the presence and proximity to family and friends was a major reason why certain areas and experiences were viewed as positive:

*“No particular place, we spend all our time in many different places. Each place is good because all my family and friends are there.”*

*“The best place I ever lived was as a child being brought up with a big family. We were always happy, mother and father were alive and all my family were close by.”*

13.31 Other people mentioned that the best place for them was when going to horse fairs and many reminisced about travelling around often during their childhood:

*"I like going to all the Traveller fairs all over. We travel down and all the family and friends book hotels and use it as a short break."*

*"Living on the road. It was a simple way of life, no worries or hassle, no bills. All we had to worry about was moving from place to place."*

*"My happiest memories are as a child being brought up around Scotland with my mother, father, brothers and sisters. We lived all over Scotland and every place was beautiful. Always happy."*

13.32 However, the place where the vast majority of people talked about as being the best was where they were currently living, particularly if they lived on an authorised site:

*"Around here, the councils are nice and the people sociable."*

*"Here behind my daughter's house; it's lovely and peaceful. She helps me, I don't have to worry about finding stopping places and it's free."*

*"Here in Newcastle, this is home. We have quite a good house, nice neighbours, people are friendly, can make a living and it's where family and friends are."*

*"In this house, I was brought up and raised there from being a small child. It's good because I have lots of happy memories."*

## 14. Travelling Showpeople

- 14.1 Travelling Showpeople occupy an unusual position in planning terms and a separate planning Circular, detailing the particular planning needs of Travelling Showpeople, has recently been produced: Circular 04/07. As well as detailing the requirements for pitch identification and allocation for Travelling Showpeople, Circular 04/07 also requires that the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople are included within GTAAAs.

### Information from local authorities

- 14.2 Current development plans include policies specifically aimed at sites for Travelling Showpeople in Newcastle and Sunderland. Three planning applications had been received relating to a site for Travelling Showpeople since 2001, one related to the erection of a fence on an existing site rather than a new site or yard (Sunderland) and two others related to plot extensions (South Tyneside). There have been no incidents of unauthorised development of sites for Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area since 2001.

Table 27: Sites for Travelling Showpeople

Site	Plots/Families	Comments
<b>Gateshead</b>		
Nil	-	
<b>Newcastle</b>		
Nil	-	
<b>North Tyneside</b>		
Nil	-	
<b>South Tyneside</b>		
Ocean Beach Amusements, South Shields	25	Established use
<b>Sunderland</b>		
Rainhill Road, Washington	1 / 2-3	Permanent site – consent given 1999 onwards. Will return to industrial use if site vacated
Grasswell Terrace, Houghton le Spring	Approx 20 / 60-70	Reportedly the largest site in the Study Area. Permanent site – consent given 1999 onwards. Will return to industrial use if site vacated
Easington Lane, Houghton le Spring	10-12 / Approx 60	Permanent site – consent given 1999 onwards. Will return to industrial use if site vacated

- 14.3 There are four sites occupied by Travelling Showpeople in the Study Area, as shown in Table 27. As can be seen, all save one are in Sunderland. The plots on the site in South Tyneside are leased from the local authority with a restriction that occupiers should work in connection with the adjacent South Shields Amusement Park, South Tyneside confirmed that there are 25 plots on this site. The number of plots or yards within Sunderland was unknown. All of the sites within Sunderland are privately owned and the details of ownership were not known to the research team. Information showing the overall size of sites has been provided from estimates by the local section of the Showmen's Guild. However, information from the Guild indicates that

plots often accommodate multiple families. By taking the average, where there is a range, the base figure for the population is an estimated 152 households.

- 14.4 The occupiers of the South Tyneside site are assumed to be in employment at the adjacent amusement park in accordance with the restrictions of the lease of the site.
- 14.5 The level of provision of sites for Showpeople has been static across the Study Area since 2001.

## **Views from Travelling Showpeople**

### ***Demographics***

- 14.6 In total 54 interviews were achieved with site (yard)-based Travelling Showpeople. 54% of respondents rented their yard; 22% were owner-occupiers; 24% were tenants of the local authority (all South Tyneside residents).
- 14.7 All households provided details about how many living units and vehicles they possessed. Thirty-six (67%) had 1 living unit, thirteen households (24%) had 2 living units and four households (7%) had 3 living units. Most households had more than one vehicle (including vans and lorries) with the average number being 2.1. This number of vehicles is lower than that of Travelling Showpeople in other assessments the Study Team have been involved in. This may be because a number of households were retired or no longer working. In addition a number of respondents reported that they had diversified and now worked in supplying catering units and kiosks, rather than possessing a number of individual fairground rides. However, it was clear that sites in both Sunderland and South Tyneside were home to Travelling Showpeople who actively travelled for work.

### ***Living conditions***

- 14.8 Most people reported having enough room for their living quarters; 15% reported that they needed more room. Generally speaking, people reported worrying about overcrowding as their family got older:

*“At the moment we are ok for space but I have two young children and I worry about their future; where will they go or live? This yard is full up.”*

*“At the moment we are ok, but when my son gets married there won't be enough room.”*

*“I am getting my own home in a year's time but our yard will be full to capacity by then; what will happen when my younger sister grows up?”*

*“The yards are overcrowded; there's no room for cars and vans.”*

- 14.9 Similarly, 20% of households reported not having enough room for vehicles. Respondents talked about the significant level of vehicle overcrowding on the sites and how they had to store their lorries and equipment elsewhere.
- 14.10 Generally speaking, the majority of households viewed their yard in a positive light on a number of issues (Table 28). The one issue which generated the most negativity was the facilities for children's play.

Table 28: Views on the yard (in %)

Issue	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor
Size of plot	39	39	15	4	4
Design of yard	33	35	13	11	7
Location	69	26	2	2	0
Facilities on yard	46	22	15	11	6
Neighbours	56	39	2	0	4
Management	50	26	15	9	0
Children's play facilities	13	11	26	19	32

Base: 54 respondents providing information

- 14.11 All households had access to most of the facilities we enquired about (including water and electric supply, WC and rubbish collection). A small number of people (13%) commented that they did not have access to fire precautions and 39% commented that there was nowhere for their children to play safely. In addition, 67% reported that they had health and safety concerns. For the Sunderland sites, such concerns included:

- Lack of lighting
- Security
- Poor road surfacing
- Overcrowding
- Refuse from neighbours

- 14.12 For the South Tyneside site all respondents complained about the lack of privacy and security on the site. Respondents commented that the general public can access the site very easily which reportedly often led to anti-social behaviour from people in the local area coming onto the site, often in Summer, and parents not letting their children play outside.

- 14.13 We asked all households to comment upon what improvements they would like to see made to their yard. For the Sunderland sites these included:

- Better lighting
- Improved parking
- Improved security and CCTV
- To expand in size
- Fewer vehicles
- Area for children to play
- Electric gates
- More outside taps

14.14 For the South Tyneside site this included:

- Exterior fencing/railings
- Somewhere safe for children to play
- Better lighting

### ***Residence and travelling***

14.15 All but four of the households had lived on the yards for 5 years or more. The remaining households had lived there for more than three years. 80% of households thought they would remain on the yard indefinitely; the remaining respondents did not know how long they would stay on the yard.

14.16 All but two of the households were local to the area in some way. For the Sunderland sites those respondents who still worked fairs travelled between 3 and 10 months of the year. Some households reported high levels of travelling; some reported not travelling and just operating kiosks or sandwich bars in the area. A number of people reported that the amount they travelled had changed for a number of reasons such as the loss of fairground sites, retirement and ill health. A total of 31% of respondents on the South Tyneside site reported very active travelling patterns to work (all belonged to 'Older Families' indicating a mixture of employment with some family members working at the adjacent amusement park and others working away). The remainder commented that they didn't travel much any more either because they had retired or that work was now near to the site.

14.17 Respondents worked most frequently on fairs in the North East areas, particular within Tees Valley, Tyne and Wear and County Durham. Some respondents also worked in the Midlands, Scotland and Yorkshire.

14.18 When working away, people tended to stay on 'fairland' (the land where the fair takes place) where this is possible. There was a mixture in opinion on the standard of some of these sites. Some were seen as 'very good'; others were seen as lacking access to basic facilities i.e. water, outside taps, rubbish disposal, electricity.

### ***Household formation and future needs***

14.19 A total of 14 households (26% of the sample) reported needing extra accommodation within the next 5-year period. This equates to a total of 17 separate households. All of these were children who required their own accommodation. Most respondents either did not know where they would want to live in 5 years' time or reported that their children would want to remain near to their family. All of these new households were expected to want to trailer based accommodation.

- 14.20 A total of 17 respondents (32% of the sample) said that they would like to move to a different residential yard; all were from Sunderland. The vast majority (65%) wanted the yard within their local area (Sunderland) or in nearby Tees Valley. Twenty-four per cent would look to other areas of the UK. Most people, however, when asked, said they wanted to remain in the North East if possible.
- 14.21 In terms of type of accommodation they would prefer when working away, if 'fairland' was not accessible, the clear favourite would be a short-term plot on a council yard (80%), and then a plot on a private site (63%).
- 14.22 When we enquired about views as to the maximum size of a residential site, the vast majority of respondents said that a site should not be any larger than 20 plots.
- 14.23 Similar to other Travellers, we asked all respondents to comment on their preferences for different forms of accommodation:
- A private site owned and lived on by them or their family
  - A site owned by other Showmen
  - A site owned by the local council
  - A family-owned house
  - A local authority- or housing association-owned house
  - A site owned by a private landlord
- 14.24 The answers were ranked on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being the worst option for them and 10 being the best option. The mean (average) answer for each scenario is presented in preference order in Table 29 below. This shows that by far the most preferred form of accommodation is a private site owned either by themselves or their family. This is followed by a site owned by the local council and then a site owned by other Showmen. Living in a house owned by a local authority or an RSL is the least favoured option.

Table 29: Views on the type of accommodation preferred

Type of site	Mean answer
A private site owned by them or their family	9.0
A site owned by the local council	8.6
A site owned by other Showmen	6.8
A family-owned house	5.5
A site owned by a private landlord	4.0
A local authority or housing association owned house	1.1

Base: 54 respondents providing information

- 14.25 Because so little is known about how Travelling Showpeople live and want to live, rather than confine respondents to tick-box answers, we wanted to provide respondents with as much chance to talk to us about their needs as was possible. Respondents from the site in South Tyneside reiterated their need for additional security but provided no further comments.

14.26 The following comments are all from respondents within Sunderland. A number of respondents felt that the council and local people needed to know more about Travelling Showpeople:

*“I think local authorities should know more about us; we are part of the community. I feel we are all lumped together with other travelling groups; more services should be afforded to us; Age Concern or recycling services don’t appear to include us at all.”*

*“I think the local authority should have some training of who we are. We are Showpeople, a cultural minority, not Gypsies. All my life I have had to explain who I am and where I come from. People know more about the Taliban than people in their own area.”*

*“I am getting married in the near future; we have lived locally all my life; it would be nice to think we are part of the local community; we have friends who I have gone to school with, yet many people think we are Gypsies. It seems it’s still ok for anyone to use racist remarks or discriminate Showpeople.”*

14.27 Others took this opportunity to speak in more depth about their current accommodation:

*“Our yard is adequate at the present. In the near future though our two children will get married and have a family of their own. Where will they live in the future? If we had a larger yard or even if the council would provide a yard or lease us/sell us some land to use we could accommodate extended family members. We want the same rights as everyone, there should be no discrimination.”*

*“I feel this yard should have a major overhaul, the roads are awful, there’s not enough space for families when their children are grown up to have their own caravan, this is used as a bedroom and private space. Because you can’t have railings around your caravan the very young children are in danger of being knocked down by cars so they have to be supervised. Many residents would like to plant flowers but can’t.”*

14.28 A number of others looked towards the future and of what could/should be available:

*“A yard run by and owned by the council would be great; it would have strict rules; people would keep it clean and tidy; it wouldn’t be overcrowded.”*

*“Family is important to Showpeople; the yard needs to be big enough to accommodate your parents, in-laws and children. It’s no good to have a yard for only yourselves as it lacks security.”*

*“Showmen who travel on and off the site on a regular basis need other requirements and need clear access at all times; retired and non-travelling Showmen have different needs.”*

*“We are desperate for a yard of our own. We have two young children; we want stability for their future; we need a home base, where the children can go to school and as they grow and work within our family business. They will have somewhere to return to. In the future, as they grow, they will eventually need a separate caravan for a bedroom so they can have private space of their own; here they can’t even kick a ball about in the yard, there’s not an inch to spare. We need somewhere for our children and future grandchildren to feel proud to return to so they can be part of the wider community.”*

## 15. An assessment of need for residential pitches

- 15.1 Nationally, there are no signs that the growth in the Gypsy and Traveller population will slow significantly. Indeed, population characteristics which have emerged from research around Gypsy and Traveller accommodation agree that the formation of new households, at levels often above non-Gypsy/Traveller households, is inevitable.<sup>39</sup> Although the supply of authorised accommodation has declined since 1994, the size of the population of Gypsies and Travellers does not appear to have been affected to a great extent. Rather, the way in which Gypsies and Travellers live has changed, including an increase in the use of unauthorised sites; innovative house-dwelling arrangements (i.e. living in trailers in the grounds of houses); overcrowding on sites; and overcrowding within accommodation units (trailers, houses, chalets, etc.).
- 15.2 From an analysis of the data presented throughout this report there is every indication that the Study Area will share in this national growth. In turn, this survey has indicated that in many Gypsy and Traveller families, older children will want to form new households, preferably near their families across the Study Area.
- 15.3 Given the presence of unauthorised encampments, household concealment and future household formation, the current supply of appropriate accommodation appears to be significantly less than the 'need' identified. It is the conclusion of the project team that there is a need for more pitch-based accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers within the Study Area. The following chapters look in depth at this issue, considering residential and transit pitch need for Gypsies and Travellers, specific pitch needs for Travelling Showpeople and needs relating to bricks and mortar accommodation.

### Calculating accommodation supply and need

- 15.4 The methods of assessing and calculating the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are still developing. In 2003 a crude estimation of additional pitch provision was made at a national level based predominantly on information contained within the Caravan Count.<sup>40</sup> The Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments also contained an illustration of how need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation might best be calculated.<sup>41</sup> In addition, guidance for Regional Planning Bodies has been produced, which outlines a systematic checklist for helping to ensure that GTAAs are accurate in their estimation of accommodation need based upon a range of factors.<sup>42</sup> It is from this latter guide that our estimation of supply and

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<sup>39</sup> Niner, P. (2003) *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, London: ODPM.

<sup>40</sup> Niner, P. (2003) *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, London: ODPM.

<sup>41</sup> CLG (2007) *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments – Guidance*, London: HMSO.

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings\\_id1508209.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings_id1508209.pdf)

need is drawn. In particular, residential accommodation need is considered by carefully exploring the following factors:

**Current residential supply**

- Socially rented pitches
- Private authorised pitches

**Residential need 2008–2013**

- Temporary planning permissions, which will end over the assessment period.
- Allowance for family growth over the assessment period.
- Need for authorised pitches from families on unauthorised developments.
- Allowance for net movement over the assessment period between sites and housing.
- Allowance for net movement over the assessment period between the Study Area and elsewhere.
- Allowance for potential closure of existing sites.
- Potential need for residential pitches in the area from families on unauthorised encampments.

**Pitch supply 2008–2013**

- Unused pitches, which are to be brought back into use over the assessment period.
- Vacancies on the socially rented site.
- Known planned site developments.

15.5 Within the guidance for producing GTAAs there is also the consideration of 'new households likely to arrive from elsewhere'. It remains unclear from the findings if movement between the Study Area and elsewhere will affect the numbers of Gypsies and Travellers requiring residential accommodation across the Study Area. Although a number of households indicated a desire to live elsewhere in the UK, these families tended to be those on unauthorised encampments who intended to maintain a travelling lifestyle or return to their permanent base.

15.6 It is understood that generally speaking, the Study Area is a popular area for Gypsies and Travellers looking for both residential and short-stay/transit accommodation as the numbers of households on unauthorised encampments and number of households on the transit pitches has shown. On the other hand, Gypsies and Travellers spoke about the 'draw' of Newcastle and Gateshead; the possibility of short-term employment opportunities in these areas; family links in the area; and the proximity to and routes to a number of horse fairs.

15.7 As this accommodation assessment (in line with other accommodation assessments) included Gypsies and Travellers within the boundaries of the Study Area, it is impossible to present a reliable estimation on the need for accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers currently living elsewhere. It is felt

that those Gypsies and Travellers who arrive from elsewhere will probably be balanced by those Gypsies and Travellers who move on from the area and leave vacancies. For simplicity, both elements (new households and private site vacancies) are omitted.

- 15.8 The Tyne and Wear sub-region is unusual, compared with other sub-regions in England and other conurbations, in currently having higher site provision for Travelling Showpeople than for Gypsies and Travellers. The level of current site provision for Gypsies and Travellers is low relative to other conurbation areas and has not increased since 1994, perhaps suggesting that there has been outward migration from the sub-region. These factors make it especially difficult to assess future requirements for the sub-region because of the relative importance of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers involved in unauthorised encampments or living in bricks and mortar accommodation. Equally, the impact of good quality site provision on movement from housing or on migration decisions is particularly hard to predict.
- 15.9 The assessment period referred to above relates to the 2008–2013 period with an alternative approach, based on household formation rates, taken to making estimates beyond this point for 2013–2018. As a result of the impact that the creation of more authorised pitches may have on the Gypsy and Traveller community (in terms of household characteristics, travelling patterns and settlement patterns), it is unwise to consider each of the above factors beyond the initial assessment period. Instead we use a simple estimate of family/household growth to illustrate likely natural increase in the Gypsy and Traveller population. This is applied to both a Study Area and local authority level.
- 15.10 Each one of these factors outlined above is taken in turn, and illustrated at both a Study Area level and local authority level. Requirements presented here are done so on a ‘need where it arises’ basis – see Chapter 18 for issues associated with this.

### **Additional residential pitch requirements**

- 15.11 Table 30 presents the Study Area requirement of need and the local authority apportionment based on the ‘need where it arises’ approach.
- 15.12 The following section looks at Table 30 and provides a more detailed explanation relating to the element of need and supply and its resulting requirement:

#### **Current residential supply**

**Row 1:** The number of pitches on socially rented sites provided by local authority information – excludes plots for Travelling Showpeople.

**Row 2:** The number of pitches on private authorised sites provided by local authority information – excludes plots for Travelling Showpeople.

**Row 3:** The total number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches (sum of rows 1 + 2) – excludes plots for Travelling Showpeople.

**Row 4:** The total number of authorised plots provided for Travelling Showpeople.

### **Residential pitch need, 2008–2013**

**Row 5:** The number of pitches affected by temporary planning permissions ending within the assessment period 2008–2013 – this is thought to consist of 7 pitches within South Tyneside. This counts towards estimated need for the Borough in which it is located.

**Row 6:** This is the number of new pitches required from new household formation. This requires estimates of:

1. The number of new households likely to form;
2. The proportion likely to require a pitch; and,
3. The proportion likely to remain within the Study Area.

15.13 For clarity purposes household formation findings from sites and houses are calculated and explained separately. These figures are then combined within Row 6.

Table 30: Summary of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople requirements by local authority area (2008–2018)

Element of supply and need		Study Area Total	Gateshead	Newcastle	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunderland
<b>Current residential supply</b>							
1	Socially rented pitches	14	14	0	0	0	0
2	Private authorised pitches	7	0	0	0	7	0
<b>3</b>	<b>Total authorised Gypsy and Traveller pitches</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Total Travelling Showpeople plots</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Residential pitch need, 2008–2013</b>							
5	End of temporary planning permissions	7	0	0	0	7	0
6	New household formation	13	4	4	1	2	2
7	Unauthorised developments	2	2	0	0	0	0
8	Movement from sites to housing	-1	-1	0	0	0	0
9	Closure of sites	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	Unauthorised encampments	36	14	3	7	2	10
<b>11</b>	<b>Additional residential need</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Additional supply, 2008–2013</b>							
12	Pitches currently closed but re-entering use	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Pitches with permission but not developed	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	New sites planned	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	Vacant pitches	10	10	0	0	0	0
<b>16</b>	<b>Supply, 2008–2013</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Requirement for extra residential pitches (2008–2013)</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Requirement for extra residential pitches (2013–2018)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>19.</b>	<b>Total requirement for extra residential pitches (2008–2018)</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>20.</b>	<b>Requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2008–2013)</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>21.</b>	<b>Requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2013–2018)</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>22.</b>	<b>Total requirement for plots for Travelling Showpeople (2008–2018)</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>43</b>

### ***Pitch requirement from new households forming on sites***

**Finding:** The analysis of the survey showed that there were no individuals requiring their own accommodation in the next 5 years from authorised sites.

#### **Assumptions:**

- Assuming a zero increase in new households from authorised sites may understate need.
- Only 8 households were interviewed on the authorised sites out of a possible 21
- In the absence of definitive survey information suggest using an assumed rate of household growth of 3% a year compound as applied to the current number of pitches available.<sup>43</sup>
- All are assumed to require pitch accommodation in the local area.

**Calculation:** 3% p.a. (over 5 years) on a base population of 21 pitches = **3 households requiring pitches.**

### ***Pitch requirement from new households forming in housing***

**Finding:** The analysis of the survey showed that the number of individuals requiring their own accommodation in the next 5 years from bricks and mortar accommodation was the equivalent of 22% of respondents.

#### **Assumptions:**

- Treating all individuals as requiring separate accommodation will probably overstate need as there may be some intermarrying within the Study Area of individuals.
- There may have been some overclaiming of need.
- Adjust these figures by 10% to account for possible inter-area household formation (i.e. 1 in every 10 young adults will marry another young adult in the Study Area) and possible overclaiming of need.
- Due to a lack of information from the respondents as to how they would want to be accommodated we assume that 50% will require pitch accommodation.
- All are assumed to remain in the Study Area.

**Calculation:** 22% of estimated housed population (100 households) = 22% of 100 minus 10% reduction = 20 households. 20 households minus 50% remaining in bricks and mortar accommodation = **10 households.**<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Household growth rates of 2% and 3% a year were suggested as appropriate in Pat Niner, *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, ODPM, 2003. In the Republic of Ireland a report noted that the 4% family growth rate assumed by the Task Force on the Travelling Community had proved very accurate between 1997 and 2004 (*Review of the Operation of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998*. Report by the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee to the Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal, 2004).

<sup>44</sup> These households represent a conservative estimation of the proportion of housed Gypsies and Travellers in the Study Area. As a result this figure may be an understatement.

15.14 Total pitches need from household formation on authorised sites and bricks and mortar housing = **13 pitches across the Study Area**.

**Row 7:** There were no 'regular' unauthorised developments in the Study Area at the time of the study. The 'irregular' unauthorised developments (households in the rear gardens of bricks and mortar dwellers) appeared to be short-term visitors and therefore do not require residential accommodation. However, there are two households (classified as 'other' here) who appear to be long-term residents in Gateshead. Since these households are, by definition, living on an unauthorised basis, these households are in need of authorised, legal accommodation. It is estimated that there is a need for approximately **2 pitches across the Study Area** to accommodate these households. This need is for permanent residential pitches, as those households who were interviewed wanted to stay in the area where they were currently living.

**Row 8:** This is the estimation of the number of households currently on site accommodation who would move into bricks and mortar housing during the 2008–2013 period.

**Finding:** No respondents on authorised sites expressed an interest in moving to a house in the Study Area

**Assumptions:**

- Zero movement from sites to housing would probably understate need as a result of the finding that households are known to move into housing as young families and as older people.
- Suggest that a nominal 5% of authorised site residents would move from sites to housing over the assessment period.

**Calculation:** 5% grossed to site-based population = 5% of site-based population (21 households) = **1 household** over the Study Area will move from site-based accommodation to housed accommodation.

15.15 Movement from housing to site has been excluded from Table 30 as it is believed it would potentially take a very attractive site to motivate people accommodated in housing to move onto site-based accommodation. The finding from the survey suggested that just 4% of bricks and mortar residents had definite movement intentions from their house. However, if these households moved from bricks and mortar housing this would mean an increase in need by 4 pitches.

**Row 9:** Plans to close existing sites, which have been calculated within the supply of site accommodation, will ultimately displace a number of Gypsies and Travellers resulting in an increase in housing need. It is the understanding of the project team that there was no intention to close any residential site in the Study Area.

**Row 10:** This provides an estimation of the need arising from households on unauthorised encampments. This factor takes into account households involved in unauthorised encampments that require a residential pitch in the Study Area. The need for transit accommodation from unauthorised encampments is considered in Chapter 16. The calculation of need for residential accommodation requires estimates of the number of households involved in unauthorised encampments, and of how many of these need a residential pitch in the Study Area.

#### ***Families involved in unauthorised encampments***

**Findings:** The Caravan Count shows potentially low numbers of unauthorised encampments for the Study Area as a whole. Survey information from the local authorities indicates that between 2005 and 2007 there is an average of 47 separate encampments across the Study Area each year. Based on the comments provided by the local authorities it is believed that this is broadly reflective of previous years.

#### **Assumptions:**

- The average encampment size during 2006 was 7 caravans. The survey showed an average of 1.4 caravans per household. This indicates there are approximately 5 families on each encampment.
- It is reasonable to assume that a number of families who feature on unauthorised encampments are repeat encampments over the study period (i.e. the local authority would be visited a number of times during the calendar year by the same family). Similar to proportions in the Tees Valley area we assume this to be the case in 50% of encampments.

**Calculation:** Average number of encampments multiplied by average encampment size (in households) minus 50% = 118 separate households.

#### ***Need for residential pitches from unauthorised encampments***

**Finding:** 38% of households on unauthorised encampments were interested in moving to a residential pitch in the Study Area. It must be noted that this is based on a relatively small sample size (21 interviews) and therefore may not be reflective of the entire population who tend to feature as unauthorised encampments.

#### **Assumptions:**

- 38% is likely to be high because of the small sample size this is drawn from, over-claiming, likelihood of interest in other areas outside of the Study Area, and from what seems reasonable.
- LA officers and stakeholders reported that in their experience only a small number of encampments that they encountered were looking for residential accommodation in the area.
- Assume need for residential pitches will be the equivalent to 30% of unauthorised encampments.

- This is treated as a single year element rather than a 'flow' of new families each year. Other households on unauthorised encampments should be incorporated into other GTAA's.

**Calculation:** 30% of households involved in unauthorised encampment = 30% of 118 = **36 households/pitches across the Study Area.**<sup>45</sup>

**Row 11:** Sum of rows 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

### **Additional supply, 2008–2013**

**Row 12:** There are no pitches closed which are due to be re-opened for re-use.

**Row 13:** There are no pitches for which planning permissions have been granted but which are not yet developed.

**Row 14:** There are no pitches on sites which are planned to be delivered within the assessment period.

**Row 15:** This is the number of pitches likely to become vacant over the 2008–2013 period. Vacancy rates on authorised private site are impossible to quantify due to a lack of information and therefore have been excluded. The site in Gateshead appears to have a vacancy rate of around 2 pitches per annum. Therefore, we assume 2 pitches will come vacant in each year over the period: 2 pitches times 5 years = **10 pitches.**

**Row 16:** Sum of rows 12, 13, 14 and 15.

**Row 17:** This is the total requirement for additional residential pitches over the 2008–2013 period. Row 11 minus Row 16 = total residential pitches required – **49 pitches over the Study Area.**

### **Permanent residential accommodation need over the next period, 2013–2018**

15.16 The current shortage of sites and pitches for Gypsies and Travellers means that it is difficult to predict trends in living arrangements once GTAA's across the country have been implemented in the form of nationally increased site/pitch provision. There is no means of knowing how Gypsies and Travellers will decide to live in the next decade. There may be an increase in smaller households, moves into bricks and mortar housing may be more common or household formation may happen at a later age. However, in order to take a strategic view, it is important to be able to plan for the longer-term. Therefore, in order to balance the complexity of issues with a need to plan for the longer term we have used an assumed rate of household growth of 3% a year compound as applied to the projected number of pitches which

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<sup>45</sup> Figure adjusted to account for rounding to nearest whole pitch at the local level.

should be available by 2013.<sup>46</sup> This figure is also quoted in the recent CLG report.<sup>47</sup> All households on sites are assumed to require pitches. It is assumed there will be no unauthorised developments over the next period and that any households on unauthorised encampments will not require permanent residential accommodation in the Study Area.

**Row 18:** (of Table 30) the total requirement for the Study Area over the period **2013–2018** is approximately an additional **10 residential pitches**.<sup>48</sup>

**Row 19: Total additional residential pitch need 2008–2018 = 59 pitches.** The precise local authority breakdown for how these pitches would need to be created is based on the ‘needs where it arises’ approach and is shown in Table 30.

15.17 The supply of pitches over the 2013–2018 period has been considered but has been assumed to be zero. This is consistent with other GTAAAs and implicitly compensates for not taking into account needs arising from drivers other than family growth.

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<sup>46</sup> Household growth rates of 2% and 3% a year were suggested as appropriate in Pat Niner, *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, ODPM, 2003. In the Republic of Ireland a report noted that the 4% family growth rate assumed by the Task Force on the Travelling Community had proved very accurate between 1997 and 2004 (*Review of the Operation of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998*. Report by the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee to the Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal, 2004).

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings\\_id1508209.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings_id1508209.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> This is rounded at a Study Area level to cover the more local level increases.

## **16. An assessment of need for transit accommodation**

16.1 Although to a certain extent nomadism and travelling are currently restricted, this remains an important feature of Gypsy and Traveller identity and way of life, even if only to visit fairs or visit family. Some Gypsies and Travellers are still highly mobile without a permanent base, and others travel for significant parts of the year from a winter base. More Gypsies and Travellers might travel if it were possible to find places to stop without the threat of constant eviction. Currently the worst living conditions are commonly experienced by Gypsies and Travellers living on unauthorised encampments who do not have easy access to water or toilet facilities and have difficulties in accessing education and health services.

### **Need for Transit Sites and Stopping Places**

16.2 National policy is clear that there should be provision in order for Gypsies and Travellers who choose to travel to do so without resorting to stopping illegally or inappropriately.

16.3 A proportion of unauthorised encampments were considered as an element in the calculation of need for residential sites, implying that needs should be met in part through a combination of residential and transit provision. In Chapter 8, information was presented on the current pattern of transient unauthorised encampment, and it suggested that the Study Area might expect approximately 46 encampments in a year, with an average size of 11 caravans. Levels of encampment are higher in summer, although encampments can occur at any time of the year.

16.4 During the course of this assessment we have found clear evidence as to the need for authorities to make some sort of provision for Gypsies and Travellers in transit. This is shown by:

- The records of local authorities and the information in Caravan Counts, both of which show a number of encampments within the Study Area;
- The views of stakeholders, particularly enforcement officers, who have regular contact with more transitory Gypsies and Travellers;
- The fieldwork experiences of the study team who found a number of unauthorised encampments whose occupiers declined participation in the assessment on the grounds that they 'were just passing through';
- The number of people who took part in the assessment who indicated they often travel to the area, but who do not want residential accommodation; and
- The level of interest in the provision of transit sites/stopping places in the area by households on authorised sites and bricks and mortar housing to allow family and friends to visit them legally.

16.5 There is no simple way of translating encampment information into estimates of transit need. However, it is recommended that each authority provides some form of transit provision in order to facilitate the travelling way of life. Although the development of one 10–15-pitch transit site may offer the level of vacancies required to cope with the number of unauthorised encampments across the Study Area, it is unlikely that the creation of one transit site would meet the needs of those households requiring short-stay accommodation. This is because:

- The nature of the Study Area – encampments occur in all local authorities – the provision of one transit site would not provide for the apparent geographic need.
- A single transit site would force the mixing of differing groups (family and ethnic) and could lead to potential tensions.
- The needs of the groups for travelling is often a mixture of motivations (i.e. work, family and holiday). A uniform transit site may not meet the differing requirements.

16.6 Although transit need could be met by the creation of ‘hard’ purpose-made pitches/sites, it is also recommended that the authorities balance the need for the development of such ‘hard’ pitches with the possibility of ‘soft’ transit pitches (i.e. designated stopping places). Such ‘softer’ options would provide Gypsies and Travellers with somewhere authorised and more secure to stop whilst creating a minimal environmental impact. A number of households would prefer the provision of designated stopping places.

16.7 Requirements for provision of transit accommodation in the period 2013–2018 are impossible to predict. Additional provision would only be required if the level of travelling were to increase markedly. This underlines the general importance of monitoring and reviewing travelling patterns and the incidence of transient unauthorised encampments regularly, and re-assessing provision usage and requirements.

### **A note on the provision of transit pitches**

16.8 It is clear that travelling and resulting unauthorised encampments are complex phenomena. In order to assist Gypsies and Travellers in maintaining their cultural practices, the development of sites needs to accommodate the diversity of travelling. It is important to note that the provision of an inappropriate form of transit accommodation may fail to reduce unauthorised encampment. In addition, as with all Gypsy and Traveller pitch accommodation, the location, design and facilities of a site need to go hand in hand with appropriate management arrangements. It is clear from the experience of many local authorities that if a transit site is not managed or used appropriately it will not be used effectively.

- 16.9 It is therefore important that flexibility is built into the provision of transit accommodation. There are two fundamental aspects here:
1. Larger pitches on residential sites provide the potential to meet the needs of short-term visitors.
  2. Variety in transit provision is needed to cater for the variety of needs. This might include formal transit sites; less-equipped stopping places used on a regular basis; or temporary sites with temporary facilities available during an event or for part of the year.
- 16.10 At a partnership level, a single transit site makes little sense. Travelling occurs at various scales. The partner authorities are in an ideal position in order to plan, devise and implement a network of transit accommodation between the local authorities. In addition, the provision of transit accommodation is an area of opportunity where the local authorities can work with adjoining regions, Counties and authorities to pool information and to ensure that proposals make sense in the wider context.

## 17. An assessment of need for Travelling Showpeople pitches

- 17.1 Circular 04/07 requires that the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople are included within GTAA's. Because of the separate planning issues for Travelling Showpeople and their differing accommodation needs, we have produced a separate calculation of residential need. It must be noted that pitches (commonly referred to as 'yards') for Travelling Showpeople are significantly larger than those required for other groups of Travellers.

### Travelling Showpeople accommodation need

- 17.2 All of the factors that are used to determine Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need are considered in order to calculate need for accommodation for Travelling Showpeople (see Chapter 15); however, a number of these are significantly different for Travelling Showpeople. In particular, this includes:
- *Unauthorised sites* – Travelling Showpeople tend not to camp illegally on land which they do not have permission for to the same extent as is experienced by other Travelling groups. Consultations with the Showmen's Guild indicated that the maintenance of good working relationships with local authorities is important to their businesses; therefore any illegal activity by Travelling Showpeople, whose occupation relies on having permission by an authority to operate, potentially risks the ability to work. As a result, Travelling Showpeople will rarely appear as unauthorised encampments, preferring instead, during the fair season, to double-up on authorised sites, use an unauthorised stopping place (often with agreement with the land owner) or travel back to their authorised pitch.
  - *Movement from other areas* – The areas in which Travelling Showpeople live are heavily influenced by the circuit of fairs that each household attends. As a result, there is a tendency to want/need to live within 'their patch' of preferred fairs, which in turn means that Travelling Showpeople will move to other areas for short-periods only rather than to seek permanent accommodation.

### Additional residential plot requirements for Travelling Showpeople

- 17.3 Within the Tyne and Wear Study Area it is particularly difficult to estimate additional plot requirements as there is no definitive information on the number of plots currently in the Study Area. South Tyneside provided information on the size of the site within their area although Sunderland could not provide such information. As a result the Showmen's Guild provided details of the size of the sites based on the number of families living there.

Taking note of this, the following requirements represent an informed estimate based on the data available.

- 17.4 Table 31 below summarises the model for residential plot requirements in the Study Area for the first 5-year period (2008–2013) local authority requirements can be found in Table 30 in Chapter 15. However, for the purposes of further clarity each requirement is expanded upon below.

Table 31: Summary of estimated need for additional residential plots for Travelling Showpeople at a Study Area level, 2008–2013

<b>Element of supply and need</b>		<b>Plots</b>
	<b>Current residential supply</b>	
1	Socially rented plots	25
2	Private authorised plots	127
<b>3</b>	<b>Total authorised plots</b>	<b>152</b>
	<b>Residential pitch need, 2008–2013</b>	
4	End of temporary planning permissions	0
5	New household formation	32
6	Unauthorised developments	0
7	Closure of yards	0
<b>8</b>	<b>Additional residential need</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Additional supply, 2008–2013</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Requirement for extra plots</b>	<b>27</b>

### **Current residential supply**

**Row 1:** The number of plots on residential socially rented yards provided by local authority information.

**Row 2:** The total number of authorised plots provided for Travelling Showpeople. One plot here equates to one household – see Chapter 14 for more information.

**Row 3:** Sum of 1 + 2

### **Residential plot need, 2008–2013**

**Row 4:** There are no temporary planning permissions due to end during the assessment period.

**Row 5:** The number of new pitches required from new household formation. This requires estimates of:

- a) The number of new households likely to form;
- b) The proportion likely to require a pitch; and
- c) The proportion likely to remain within the Study Area.

**Finding:** The analysis of the survey showed that the number of individuals requiring their own accommodation in the next 5 years from authorised yards was the equivalent of 42% of respondents.

**Assumptions:**

- As the information we have used relies on an estimation of households currently in the area it is likely that this count has included households which are currently overcrowded.
- There may have been some overclaiming of need.
- All are assumed to remain in the Study Area.
- All are assumed to require trailer/plot-based accommodation.
- Suggest a 50% reduction in order to counter the above issues.

**Calculation:** 42% of estimated plot-based population (152 households) = 42% of 152 minus 50% reduction = **32 households**.

**Row 6:** According to the information received from the local authorities, there was no unauthorised development of yards at the time of the assessment.

**Row 7:** The research team understood that there was no intention to close any yards within the Study Area.

**Row 8:** Sum of rows 4, 5, 6 and 7.

**Row 9:** An analysis of management information from the socially rented site in South Tyneside revealed that there has been approximately one vacancy arising per year. As such it is estimated that over the period **5 plots** will become vacant. No information is available for the sites within Sunderland and therefore in line with other GTAAs, where the turnover of Travelling Showpeople plots have been found to be low or zero, no adjustment for vacancies arising have been made.

**Row 10:** Sum of row 8 minus row 9. There is a need for **27 residential permanent plots** for Travelling Showpeople (see row 21 of Table 30).

**Permanent residential accommodation need over the next period, 2013–2018**

- 17.5 Similar to the case with Gypsies and Travellers, the current shortage of sites and pitches for Travelling Showpeople means that it is difficult to predict trends in living arrangements once GTAAs across the country have been implemented in the form of nationally increased site/pitch provision. However, in order to take a strategic view, it is important to be able to plan for the longer term. Therefore, in order to balance the complexity of issues with a need to plan for the longer term we have used an assumed rate of household growth of 2% a year compound as applied to the projected number of pitches which

should be available by 2013.<sup>49</sup> All households on yards sites are assumed to require plots. It is assumed there will be no unauthorised developments over the next period.

- 17.6 The total requirement for the Study Area, adjusted for local level rounding to whole pitches, over the period **2013–2018** is an additional **19 residential plots** (see row 21 of Table 30).

**Total additional residential pitch need, 2008–2018 = 46 plots** (row 22 of Table 30)

- 17.7 The supply of pitches over the 2013–2018 period has been considered but has been assumed to be zero. This is consistent with other GTAAs and implicitly compensates for not taking into account needs arising from drivers other than family growth.

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<sup>49</sup> Although household growth rates of 3% a year are typically used for Gypsies and Travellers, 2% has been used here to account for the smaller families of Travelling Showpeople in comparison to Gypsies and Travellers.

## 18. Recommendations

18.1 This final chapter provides some overarching recommendations, based on the findings of the study, for the Partner Authorities as well as stakeholders; there are five main areas of recommendations discussed below.

### **Working towards meeting the identified need**

- 18.2 If no or little progress is made in meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the sub-region it is likely that this would involve:
- No additional public site/pitch provision. Pitches on existing public and private sites would come available through current natural turnover and these would then be let according to current allocation policies and practices;
  - Receiving applications for the development of private Gypsy or Traveller sites. The national trend indicates that these will often be unsuccessful (around 60% of the time). It is likely that these will stimulate long processes of refusals, enforcement, appeals and inquiries;
  - A continuation, and possible increase, in the number of unauthorised developments occurring across the Study Area; and
  - The continuation and eventual increase in the number of unauthorised encampments across the Study Area.
- 18.3 The implications of this are that:
- The various needs that have been identified during the course of this assessment will not be met;
  - Households which are currently suppressed and new households which are forming will not be able to locate appropriate accommodation across the Study Area;
  - Families living on unauthorised encampments will continue to experience poor living conditions and poor access to basic services;
  - The legal and other costs of accommodating unauthorised sites continue and may increase;
  - Any current community cohesion between members of the non-Traveller community and Travelling communities may be put under pressure as unauthorised developments and encampments occur repeatedly across the Study Area; and
  - The authorities fail to meet the requirements of both the Housing Act 2004 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which outlines the requirement for plans to be developed in order to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.
- 18.4 This report has provided a quantification of the current shortfall and future anticipated need for pitch-based accommodation. The dominant and overarching recommendation arising from this assessment of need is that each of the local authorities, in partnership with key agencies, should take a

proactive approach to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in order to meet the accommodation need identified in this assessment.

### **Moving from ‘need where it arises’ to ‘need where it should be met’**

- 18.5 Because of the historical inequalities in pitch provision, Gypsies and Travellers have constrained choices as to where and how they would choose to live if they had real choice. So while choices for the non-Travelling community are generally much wider, as there is social housing available in every authority in the country, there are no local authority sites in 138 of the 353 local authorities in England, and only in 71 authorities is there more than one site. Some authorities have no authorised private sites. Over time, this has inevitably meant that Gypsies and Travellers have generally moved to areas they see as offering the best life chances, for example an authority which provides a site; an authority which is perceived as having more private authorised sites than others; or an authority that is attractive in some other way (slower enforcement, transport links, friends and family resident, etc.). Therefore, there is a tendency, when the need for additional accommodation is assessed, for the needs assessment to further compound these inequalities in site provision. For example, authorities which already provide Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (publicly or privately) are assessed as having greater need for additional pitch provision than authorities with little or no pitch provision. This is compounded further the longer-term the assessment is made.
- 18.6 Due to a lack of suitable robust alternatives, and in line with Guidance and common practice in GTAAs, Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs have been assessed following this ‘need where it arises’ basis. However, the results of this apportionment between local authorities should not necessarily be assumed to imply that those needs should be actually met in that specific locality. This distribution reflects the current uneven distribution of pitch provision and the current spread of the Gypsy and Traveller population across the Study Area.
- 18.7 These requirements should be considered illustrative and decisions about where and how the need identified here should be met should be strategic, taken in partnership with local authorities and the North East Assembly – involving consultation with Gypsies and Travellers and other interested parties – which will take into account wider social and economic planning considerations such as equity, choice and sustainability whilst being informed by the views of the Gypsies and Travellers who participated in this study. The ultimate goal for all parties will be to work towards meeting needs where they should be met rather than where they happen to arise.

## **The role of regional partners**

- 18.8 Although Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAAAs) such as this one are very much a local authority obligation, they also have a crucial regional role, just as their mainstream counterparts do. GTAAAs also provide the evidence needed to inform the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Regional Housing Strategy (RHS); Chapters 1 and 3 briefly described the regional role. This role involves taking a strategic view of need across all sub-regions within the North East. This is important because:
- Gypsies and Travellers have not traditionally recognised local authority boundaries;
  - travelling occurs across local authority and sub-regional borders;
  - a broader view is required to ensure residential and transit accommodation is provided in the most appropriate places and makes sense as a whole package of provision; and
  - the needs of Gypsies and Travellers will be integrated alongside the needs of the non-Gypsy and Traveller population in mainstream housing.
- 18.9 It is therefore vital that the local authority partners actively engage with the regional planning body to ensure this strategic view is as effective as possible.

## **The importance of partnership working**

- 18.10 Engaging with a broad array of partners will be essential in order to move Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision and service development forward. Effective partnership working should be developed with:
- internal staff and departments within each local authority to ensure a joined-up approach;
  - elected members;
  - the local authorities which form the sub-region;
  - regional bodies (Government Office, regional planning body, Regional Housing Board);
  - Homes and Communities Agency;
  - key stakeholders including health, education and training, police and residential social landlords; and
  - Gypsies and Travellers (including the Showmen's Guild).
- 18.11 Only via effective partnership working can the accommodation needs identified here be addressed and have the best opportunity for long-term success.

## **Ensuring accommodation options are appropriate**

- 18.12 This needs assessment has provided evidence to support the need for a repertoire of provision. Some respondents expressed preferences for small sites, some for larger ones. Most respondents wanted to develop a private site for themselves and their family; some expressed preferences for sites managed by Gypsies and Travellers; others thought this would not be a good idea. New site provision should cater as far as possible for the variety of needs and preferences which result from the diversity of the local Gypsy and Traveller population. This means variety of site tenure, site size, location and design.
- 18.13 Following the receipt of the GTAA, members of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities should be approached for their future participation in consultation exercises on how to take the findings forward. This is particularly important when looking at the location of potential sites, both social and private. The most successful consultations will occur only if there are tangible areas of land to be discussed and consulted upon.<sup>50</sup>
- 18.14 Clearly the process of developing accommodation to meet the need identified here will require significant funding. If sites/pitches are to be socially rented, funding will be applied for from the Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant held by Communities and Local Government. If socially rented sites are to be developed, those officers and agencies leading the planning, design and development of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation should involve the Gypsy and Traveller population in all stages.

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<sup>50</sup> Emerging good practice is available here from Norfolk and North Lincolnshire.

## Appendix 1: Local Plan Policies on Gypsy Site Provision

<b>The Gateshead Unitary Development Plan, July 2007</b>	
	<p><b>Policy H11</b>  <i>Provision for gypsies and travelling showpeople will be permitted where:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>there is satisfactory access, within reasonable and practicable walking distance, to facilities, including schools and shops;</i></li> <li>b) <i>the site would not be subject to unacceptable levels of noise, air pollution, smell or contamination;</i></li> <li>c) <i>there would not be an unacceptable impact on local amenity; and</i></li> <li>d) <i>a satisfactory standard of landscaping, access, servicing, sanitation and refuse facilities is achieved.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Newcastle upon Tyne Unitary Development Plan, January 1998</b>	
	<p><b>H1.6 Gypsy accommodation</b>  <i>The provision of further permanent and/or transit accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers will be considered if the need arises. Proposals will be allowed provided that they:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. <i>Have satisfactory access to essential community facilities, including schools and shops;</i></li> <li>B. <i>Would not harm the amenity or character of the surrounding area;</i></li> <li>C. <i>Meet satisfactory standards for every user in respect of space for general domestic purposes, and essential services including water and sanitation; and</i></li> <li>D. <i>Provide satisfactory site boundaries, landscaping, vehicle and pedestrian access, parking and circulation.</i></li> </ol>
<b>North Tyneside Unitary Development Plan, 2002</b>	
	<p><b>Policy H14</b>  <i>Proposals for Gypsy caravan sites will only be approved where all of the following criteria can be met:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. <i>The proposed site is not in the Green Belt; and</i></li> <li>II. <i>The proposal would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the surrounding area; and</i></li> <li>III. <i>That adequate provision could be made for vehicular access, parking and circulation; and</i></li> <li>IV. <i>That there would be no adverse environmental impact arising from the proposal; and</i></li> <li>V. <i>That there would be no conflict with statutory undertakers or agricultural interests; and</i></li> <li>VI. <i>That services could be made available; and</i></li> <li>VII. <i>That the site characteristics are consistent with the advice contained in Annex B to Circular 1/94 (Gypsy Sites and Planning).</i></li> </ol>
<b>South Tyneside Unitary Development Plan, 1999</b>	
	<p><b>Policy H9</b>  <i>Planning applications for the development of Gypsy caravan sites will be granted only where the local planning authority is satisfied that:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. <i>The proposed site is not in the Green Belt;</i></li> <li>B. <i>No avoidable environmental impact will result from the implementation of the scheme;</i></li> <li>C. <i>Proposed vehicular and pedestrian access and car parking provision are consistent with the standards specified in this Plan;</i></li> <li>D. <i>The amenity of the occupants of any dwellings nearby will not be adversely affected by the implementation of the proposed scheme;</i></li> </ol>

	<p><i>E. There would be no potential conflict with statutory undertakers of agricultural interests;</i></p> <p><i>F. The layout of the proposed development is consistent with advice contained in Annex B of Circular 1/94;</i></p> <p><i>G. The proposed development is consistent with all other policies and proposals in this Plan; and</i></p> <p><i>H. Means of surface and foul water drainage, consistent with the scale of development, are available, or will be made available, in time to serve the completed site prior to its occupation</i></p>
<p><b>Sunderland Unitary Development Plan, 1998</b></p>	
	<p><b>Policy H20</b></p> <p><i>Proposals for the development of Gypsy sites will normally only be approved where there are no serious adverse effects on local amenity and provided that the sites are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>i. Visually unintrusive;</i></li> <li><i>ii. Adequately screened and landscaped;</i></li> <li><i>iii. Accessible to shops, community facilities and other services.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>In all cases, proposals must include a hard surfaced vehicular access and make provision for parking, utility services, sanitation and refuse storage facilities adequate for the anticipated level of use.</i></p>

## Appendix 2: Core Strategy etc. Policies on Gypsy Site Provision

<b>Box 2: Core Strategy etc. Policies on Gypsy Site Provision</b>	
<b>Gateshead</b>	
	<i>The emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy Issues and Options document will include an issue and options relating to Gypsy and Traveller sites. No public documents are available at present.</i>
<b>Newcastle Local Development Framework Draft Core Strategy DPD, 2008</b>	
	<p>The original Core Strategy DPD: Submission Draft May 2008 as withdrawn 17 December 2008, contained a criteria based policy relating to sites for gypsies, travellers and show people as given below:</p> <p>Policy CS6: Sites for gypsies, travellers and show people</p> <p><i>Should a need be identified for sites for gypsies and travellers or for more travelling showpeople then land will be allocated for one or more sites in accordance with the following criteria, which will also be used to assess applications for sites for gypsies and travellers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) adequate availability of utilities and access to the highway network;</i></li> <li><i>b) good access to key services and facilities, including transport, local shops, good quality open spaces, health and education facilities and to employment opportunities;</i></li> <li><i>c) compatibility with adjacent land uses and scope to satisfactorily address any visual or landscape impact, and</i></li> <li><i>d) the suitability of the site for a mixed residential and business use in the case of sites for travelling showpeople.</i></li> </ol> <p>It is anticipated that the new Core Strategy (timetable will be incorporated within a draft revised LDF Local Development Scheme. We hope to take a report on this to Committee in March 2009) will contain one of more policies relating to the provision of gypsy and traveller sites. The Site Specific Land Allocations DPD should indicate opportunities as appropriate.</p>
<b>North Tyneside</b>	
	<i>The emerging North Tyneside Core Strategy includes a policy for Gypsy and Traveller communities and their sites. This will be used to guide the allocation of sites in other Development Plan Documents within the LDF. At the time of the study the Core Strategy text was in draft form and only available for internal discussion. North Tyneside indicated that The Core Strategy November 2006 Issues and Options paper outlines the public position and the current active policy contained in the saved UDP (Policy H14 – see Appendix 1).</i>
<b>South Tyneside local development framework Adopted Core Strategy, June 2007</b>	
	<p><b>Policy SC5 Providing for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites</b></p> <p><i>We will promote and provide authorised sites for gypsies and travellers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>A. where there is genuine and proven need and demand; and</i></li> <li><i>B. by the allocation, where necessary, of suitable and sustainable gypsy and traveller caravan sites in the site specific allocations</i></li> </ol>

	<p>development plan documents and by granting planning permission for such sites where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. they would not prejudice potential redevelopment proposals within the Borough's priority regeneration areas;</li> <li>ii. they would not be located within any known high flood risk areas;</li> <li>iii. they would not compromise the objectives of designation of any nationally recognised element of the Borough's built or natural environmental assets, including existing and proposed World Heritage Sites;</li> <li>iv. any harm caused to the Green Belt by reasons of inappropriateness and any other harm would be clearly outweighed by other considerations amounting to very special circumstances;</li> <li>v. any significant adverse effects on surrounding residential and environmental amenities and safety considerations are acceptably minimised; and</li> </ol> <p>C. In accordance with other relevant detailed development control policies.</p>
<p><b>Sunderland Core Strategy Local Development Framework, Development Plan Document, Preferred Options, December 2007</b></p>	
	<p><b>Policy CS5 : Housing choice</b></p> <p><i>To ensure a range and choice of housing types and tenures are incorporated into all housing developments which meet the needs and aspirations of the city's existing and future residents, the City Council will:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) . . .</li> <li>ii) . . .</li> <li>iii) . . .</li> <li>iv) <i>Ensure that provision is made for gypsy and traveller sites where there is a proven need and demand, with sites:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Being located so as to avoid adverse effects on the wellbeing of site occupiers</i></li> <li>• <i>Being reasonably accessible to local services and facilities</i></li> <li>• <i>Being located where they will not be detrimental to the city's regeneration aims</i></li> <li>• <i>Being located away from any known high flood risk areas</i></li> <li>• <i>Being located so as to avoid environmentally sensitive areas (both natural and cultural)</i></li> <li>• <i>Being located so as not to have any detrimental impact on residential amenities and highway safety</i></li> <li>• <i>Being located so as not to create a significant intrusion into the landscape</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><i>All new housing developments must satisfy the housing environment vision – providing housing in appropriate sustainable locations within a high quality environmental setting and of high quality build and design.</i></p>

### Appendix 3: Key considerations for GTAAs

To a certain extent, in terms of other assessments of accommodation/housing need, Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments are unique. Although they model their more mainstream counterparts, producing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments is a complex endeavour. The following aims to outline some of the key considerations that should be taken in the production of GTAAs and highlights some of the complexities involved when assessing the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.<sup>51</sup>

#### Establishing who to consult

Defining Gypsies and Travellers is not straightforward. Different definitions have been used for different purposes based, for example, on ethnicity and self-ascription. The historical, migratory and ethnic roots of various Gypsies and Travellers are something which has been discussed by a broad literature base.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, since the 1960s Gypsies and Travellers have been affected by significant pieces of legislation and policy and it is also not the intention to detail the various legislative and policy context here.<sup>53</sup>

In practice, since 2006, there are now variable definitions of the collective term 'Gypsies and Travellers' applied for different legislative purposes in relation to housing and planning. The planning definition refers to:

*“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such”* (ODPM Circular 01/2006, para. 15).

This particular definition 'seeks to capture those with specific land use requirements arising from their current or past nomadic way of life'.<sup>54</sup> This excludes ethnicity as a component largely because some Gypsies and ethnic Travellers have no personal history of travelling and, therefore, no requirements under this legislation, while other non-ethnic travelling population groups (for example New Travellers) may have.

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<sup>51</sup> Adapted from Brown, P., Hunt, L., Steele, A. and Niner, P. (2007) North West Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments: A Good Practice Guide. SHUSU: The University of Salford.

<sup>52</sup> These two recent texts highlight some of the key issues in presenting the historical dimension of Gypsy and Traveller identities: Clark, C. and Greenfields, M. (2006) *Here to Stay: The Gypsies and Travellers of Britain*, University of Hertfordshire Press; Bancroft, A. (2005) *Roma and Gypsy-Travellers in Europe: Modernity, Race, Space and Exclusion*, Hants: Ashgate.

<sup>53</sup> For a comprehensive overview see Niner, P. (2003) *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, London: ODPM.

<sup>54</sup> ODPM (2006) *Definition of the term 'Gypsies and Travellers' for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004*, Consultation Paper, February, London: HMSO.

Travelling Showpeople (more commonly referred to as Showmen) tend to be defined by their business/occupation in relation to Travelling shows, fairs and festivals. However, in recent years, with the decline in the market for the fair, the community has experienced some changes. Showpeople sites are traditionally known as 'winter quarters', as the nature of employment often requires lengthy and sustained periods of absence. As the employment opportunities for Showpeople are changing, there is now a need for permanent occupation by some family members for security, social, economic and educational reasons. Many established winter and permanent quarters have been lost in recent years to redevelopment schemes, causing other sites to become overcrowded and increasing the number of unauthorised pitches/sites.

Travelling Showpeople are defined, for the purposes of Circular 04/2007, as:

*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 in ODPM Circular 01/2006.*

The group is thus defined by distinctive occupations – travelling around the country to provide, for short periods of time, circuses, fairs, rides and amusements with associated catering and other stalls.

For the purpose of the Housing Act 2004, the definition of 'Gypsies and Travellers', which has recently been finalised, defines Gypsies and Travellers as:

- (a) persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan; and,*
- (b) all other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including:*
  - (i) such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently; and*
  - (ii) members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).*

This definition is aimed to be used alongside the planning definition but offers a broader, more inclusive base, devised with a certain degree of pragmatism in order to ensure that local authorities capture all nomadic groups whose accommodation needs must be assessed, including New Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

In terms of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments, when looking for members of the community to assess, local authorities should take the broad Housing Act 2004 definition and seek to include as wide a Gypsy and Traveller population as possible.

### **What information is routinely available about the communities?**

There are a number of components to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments. These components rely upon an analysis of existing data sources, the experiences and knowledge of key stakeholders, and the analysis of the living conditions and views of Gypsies and Travellers.

At the current time, there is a general lack of robust and reliable data on the Gypsy and Traveller population. This is beginning to change as a result of the recent growing research focus on the needs of this community. However, for some time yet, the paucity of this information will remain a major barrier to developing a coherent understanding of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs. As a result, GTAA's need to integrate as many data sources as is possible to achieve a relatively reliable picture of the community in question. Information can be gathered from a number of sources.

#### ***Information from the local authority***

The main source of information comes from within the local authority itself. Although few local authorities currently hold centralised information about Gypsy and Traveller issues (this may change over time) various local authority departments are able to provide information about current authorised provision in an area, both private and socially rented. They may also hold some information about unauthorised sites (Planning, Enforcement and Legal Departments may hold this information, along with Gypsy Liaison Officers, if the authority has them). However, each local authority will have different ways of recording information in relation to the local population and their housing, planning and land use issues.

A wide variety of information can be obtained from various places within each local authority including:

- The size, dynamics and management of local authority sites;
- Number of adults and children living on the site;
- Pitch turnover;
- Size of waiting lists;
- Doubling-up on sites;
- Standard of site;
- Rent level;
- Any planned work to site;
- Strategies/policies relating to Gypsies and Travellers;
- Unauthorised encampments in the area;
- Evictions proceedings;
- Unauthorised developments;

- Planning applications; and
- Gypsies and Travellers living in social housing.

### ***Information from the Census***

The 2001 Census did not include Gypsies and Travellers as distinct ethnic groups (it is anticipated that the planned 2011 Census may include the categories of Irish Traveller and Romany Gypsy). However, this information is likely to remain sporadic if Gypsies and Travellers choose not to disclose their ethnicity for whatever reason (i.e. fear of discrimination or harassment) and will not be available for at least the next 3–4 years.

### ***Traveller Education Services (TES)***

Traveller Education Services (TES) are often well placed to provide information about the characteristics of the local Gypsy and Traveller population as they collect a significant amount of information about the community. They may also be able to help identify families to be interviewed. There are a number of strengths and weaknesses to using this approach.

#### *Strengths*

Can assist in accessing a broad number of Gypsy and Traveller households

Can often provide excellent links to people in largely hidden 'bricks and mortar' accommodation

Can provide information about Showpeople

Can access Pupil-level annual census (PLASC), which provides information about the ethnicity of pupils

Can access the perspectives of a younger generation of Gypsies and Travellers

#### *Weaknesses*

Assisting in GTAA's can be resource intensive for the local TES workers

May only be aware of households with children/young people between the ages of 0–19 years

Information may not always be geographically or socially comprehensive

Links with households in bricks and mortar housing often lessen significantly over time

### ***The Caravan Count***

The main source of systematically collected information available is the bi-annual Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count, which has been in operation since 1979. This is co-ordinated by CLG in England and carried out by each local authority. Similarly, this approach has a number of inherent strengths and weaknesses.

### *Strengths*

It is the only nationwide measure of the Gypsy and Traveller population

It is the only publicly available source of information about the Gypsy and Traveller population

It is available at a local authority level as well as regionally and nationally

It offers a guide to local population in terms of accommodation type (i.e. authorised or unauthorised)

It provides an indication of trends over time

### *Weaknesses*

It will not provide information on people living in bricks and mortar accommodation

It has been subject to criticism for being both inconsistent and inaccurate, presenting underestimates of the Gypsy and Traveller population (even those living in caravans)

It only presents a 'snapshot' of the population for 2 days out of the year (summer and winter)

It has been inconsistent in classifying what is deemed 'caravans', which has led to certain inconsistencies between authorities and time-periods

It counts caravans and not households

It does not include Travelling Showpeople, and does not always include New Travellers

### ***Other sources of information***

In addition to these sources of information, the compilation of information about the Gypsy and Traveller community can often be assisted by other stakeholders. Such stakeholders could include:

- Showmen's Guild
- Supporting People teams
- Health workers
- Community and Voluntary sector, such as the CAB or Gypsy and Traveller support groups (i.e. Northern Network, Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Voice)

It must be taken into consideration that, regardless of the range of information sources, due to the current lack of comprehensiveness of much of this information, it is currently very challenging to reliably establish the size of the total population (known as the base population)<sup>55</sup> or their living arrangements in any definitive way. The completion of GTAAs should, for many authorities, be a first step in gaining some ideas of the local population of Gypsy and

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<sup>55</sup> This poses a challenge as the base population is used as a basis from which many of the pitch requirements arising from a GTAA are calculated.

Traveller households in their boroughs. The largest gaps may occur with regard to those living in bricks and mortar and on unauthorised encampments, given the constraints mentioned above. However, these GTAA's may be the first time that the needs of these groups have been assessed; therefore, any consultation is an important step towards including previously excluded populations.

### ***Methods of gathering information with key stakeholders***

One of the best methods of collecting the required data from the local authorities is through the use of a comprehensive questionnaire. This can be coordinated by one key contact within the authority, who ensures that it is completed by the relevant individuals. See 'Survey Instrument' document which includes copies of the questionnaires used in the Tyne and Wear sub-region.

In addition to the questionnaire, the use of focus groups/interviews with key stakeholders enables the greater discussion of the data from the questionnaire, as well as other key issues. Telephone or face-to-face interviews can also be conducted with selected stakeholders.

### **Engaging with the Gypsy and Traveller community**

One of the most important aspects of a GTAA is the survey with Gypsies and Traveller households. Engaging people in the assessment can sometimes be challenging. Before beginning any survey, it is essential to be clear about the type of provision available in the authority, as well as some idea about the size and make-up of the Gypsy and Traveller population.

There are different types of sites that can be included in a GTAA. There are *authorised sites*, which can be run by the local authority/county council, a private landlord (which may or may not be a Gypsy or Traveller) or a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). There are also *unauthorised sites*. This includes unauthorised developments, which occur on land owned by a Gypsy or Traveller, but where planning permission for a site has not been granted; and, unauthorised encampments, which refers to people stopping on land that does not belong to them.

However, in order to be as inclusive as possible, a GTAA should also include those living in bricks and mortar accommodation, as well as Travelling Showpeople.

There are different ways to contact different groups of Gypsies and Travellers. For local authority sites, often the best method is introductions through the site warden or the authority Gypsy Liaison Officer. This has proven a very effective method in certain areas, enabling access to at least 50% of site residents. While this method is effective, this person's role and the power dynamic must be taken into consideration. For example, they may be regarded as a figure of authority, and therefore make people wary of answering questions and the responses they give. It is vital that this contact

is not present during the interview, unless the interviewee requests their presence. Confidentiality is also imperative in any interview. With regard to Showpeople living/stopping in the area, the first point of contact should be the representative from the Showmen's Guild for that particular area.<sup>56</sup>

With regard to people living in bricks and mortar accommodation, the Traveller Education Service has particular knowledge of these households. They may also be aware of Showpeople living in the area. However, as mentioned previously, they may only be aware of those families with school-aged children.

With regards to unauthorised encampments it might be possible for Police Gypsy Liaison Officers or enforcement officers to provide some access.

Furthermore, as will be discussed in greater detail below, the use of Community Interviewers (CIs) offers additional engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community, as CIs will have a great deal of local knowledge, particularly with regard to private sites, unauthorised encampments/developments and people living in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Whatever method of accessing Gypsies and Travellers is used, consideration must be given to the fact that people can be suspicious about the purpose of the assessment and what the information will be used for. It can sometimes be difficult to motivate people to take part in something that they themselves do not understand, or do not see as relevant to them, particularly if it is felt that it may not result in any concrete changes or developments.

It is therefore vital to be able to build up trust with the community, and fully explain the purpose and expected outcomes of the assessment in terms that will make sense to people. There can be issues around people's expectations of what will happen as a result of the assessment. One group of people interviewed on an unauthorised encampment in one area thought that their names were being put on the waiting list for a site that was being built. This was despite the purpose of the assessment being explained to them by members of the study team. It is therefore vital to keep reiterating what the assessment can and cannot do.

In addition, when using gatekeepers to access any population, as mentioned previously, it is vital to take into account their relationship with the Gypsy and Traveller population. It is important to find out as much information as possible about who is trusted or liked by the community, as it may prove difficult to gain access to people through a contact that they do not like, for whatever reason.

What is clear is that there are pros and cons to all of the methods of engaging with the Gypsy and Traveller community and a flexible approach is needed when identifying potential interviewees. We would recommend using a

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<sup>56</sup> Although it should be noted that some Travelling Showpeople and Travelling Circus households will not be members of the Guild.

combination of a number of key contacts and methods outlined above. This will ensure that you have a variety of different access points, and can therefore be as reflective of the known population as possible. Careful consideration also needs to be given to the amount of time it takes for proper and sustainable engagement with the community, and this needs to be factored into the assessment timetable (see below for further discussion of this).

### ***Timing of the assessment***

Generally, the longer the time period allocated to the fieldwork element of the assessment, the more likely the findings will accurately reflect the travelling patterns of the local Gypsy and Traveller composition. This allows for seasonal travelling to be incorporated and for reluctant/unavailable households to have the opportunity to opt into the assessment at a later date.

### ***Sampling***

A main concern for many local authorities is that the sample of households involved in the assessment should be as representative of the resident Gypsy and Traveller population as possible. It is not possible to offer a definitive view of the minimum sample size required for a GTAA as this will be influenced by a number of factors, such as the relative known size of the community, accessibility and timing of the assessment.

Reflecting the paucity of data available about the size of the Gypsy and Traveller community in many local authorities, it is difficult to set strict quotas for the assessment. However, the information gleaned from key stakeholders in the area will greatly assist in achieving an appropriate picture of the composition of the local population. Having received such information, the sample of Gypsy and Traveller households should seek, wherever possible, to include all known sites in an area, taking a set proportion of interviews from each site (for example 50% of pitches), balanced with a need to ensure that the diversity of the population is included. It must be noted that for a variety of reasons, such a sampling strategy may not be appropriate, and not achieving a 50% sample from each site does not necessarily equate to having sampling flaws or less reliable data.

However, it needs to be taken into account that although careful planning of a sample may occur, for pragmatic reasons, the sample is likely to reflect the snowballing and opportunistic nature of participant recruitment, with volunteers and people known to the interviewers/CIs forming large contingents of the total sample.

For the reasons noted above, at least until data collection, monitoring and recording practices are improved, tests of statistical significance are likely to be redundant.

## **Issues to cover in the interviews**

With regard to survey design, the questionnaire has to be comprehensive, but at the same time you must ensure that it is not so long that people lose interest when being interviewed. We would recommend that an interview lasts approximately 20–30 minutes; any longer than this can lead to frustration and a possible lack of interest from respondents.

In previous GTAA's, consultation about questionnaire design has occurred with members of local Gypsy and Traveller groups. This is useful as it enables you to gauge whether or not the questions are accessible to the population at which they are aimed. It also encourages buy-in to the assessment as you are involving people in the whole assessment process.

## **Engagement of Community Interviewers – benefits and drawbacks**

The direct involvement of members of a particular community as Community Interviewers is a method used in many assessments of accommodation need and is now an approach which has been transferred to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments. In the Tyne and Wear GTAA a small number of local Gypsies and Travellers were recruited to act as Community Interviewers. They received training in interviewing techniques, familiarisation with the questionnaire as well as advice on health and safety and confidentiality. They also received support during the fieldwork period to monitor progress and maintain momentum. From experience, the most appropriate mechanism for identifying and recruiting potential Community Interviewers is by personal recommendation by key stakeholders and 'word of mouth', as opposed to general advertising.

There are a number of important potential benefits to engaging Community Interviewers for a GTAA:

- It helps foster a shared sense of responsibility for the assessment and encourages 'buy-in' to the process and outcomes, as noted above;
- It ensures that the interviews are culturally sensitive and that the language used is appropriate;
- There is greater opportunity to access the more 'hard to reach' sections of the community via family/kinship and social networks;
- They are particularly useful in contacting the more transient families, as they are more likely to be aware of their travelling patterns;
- It offers members of the community the opportunity to learn new skills;
- It provides an income source, which contributes to the economic sustainability of the community.

At the same time, this approach is not without its potential drawbacks:

- As with key stakeholders, the reputation of the individual interviewer within the community could restrict access to particular sections of the community;

- The interviewer could rely primarily on access to known contacts within the community (such as kinship networks), which could lead to bias in the sample;
- Relatively low literacy levels and writing skills among some of the interviewers could result in limited qualitative information being recorded.

On balance, however, Community Interviewers are an important mechanism for community engagement and conducting the assessment, particularly in relation to the potential for generating a shared sense of responsibility for the assessment.

### **How to interpret the data**

The data collected through the GTAA should enable each local authority to come up with figures on the current levels of Gypsy and Traveller households in the area, current provision and the number of households who have immediate accommodation needs. It should also be able to provide information on the type of accommodation required, for example local authority/RSL pitches; transit sites; bricks and mortar. With regard to future need, which is more difficult to project, the GTAA should be able to provide information on estimated household growth and population increase, and a range of additional pitches required to meet future need.

### **Calculating need**

The methods of assessing and calculating the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are still developing. In 2003 a crude estimation of additional pitch provision was made at a national level, based predominantly on information contained within the Caravan Count.<sup>57</sup> The Draft Practice Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments also contained an illustration of how need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation might best be calculated.<sup>58</sup> More recently, guidance for Regional Planning Bodies has been produced, which outlines a systematic checklist for ensuring that GTAAs are accurate in their estimation of accommodation need, based upon a range of factors.<sup>59</sup> It is by using this latter guide that we recommend a methodology for estimating accommodation need. In particular, accommodation need is considered by carefully exploring the following factors:

- Current shortfall of pitches represented by families on authorised sites who are overcrowded and/or doubled up;<sup>60</sup>
- Allowance for family growth over the assessment period;

<sup>57</sup> Niner, P. (2003) Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, London: ODPM.

<sup>58</sup> CLG (2006) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments, Draft Practice Guidance, p. 22.

<sup>59</sup> [http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings\\_id1508209.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/209/PreparingRegionalSpatialStrategyreviewsonGypsiesandTravellersbyregionalplannings_id1508209.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> These equate with 'concealed' households or 'involuntary sharers' in mainstream housing assessments.

- Accommodation need as determined by site waiting lists
- Need for authorised pitches from families on unauthorised developments;
- End of temporary planning permissions;
- Allowance for net movement over the assessment period between sites and housing;
- Allowance for net movement over the assessment period between the Study Area and elsewhere;
- Allowance for potential closure of existing sites; and
- Potential need for residential pitches in the area from families on unauthorised encampments.

Many of these factors will be able to be explored by drawing upon the information provided from within the local authority or from the Gypsy and Traveller survey. However, there can be dangers in taking this information at face value, particularly if there are concerns about the realism of some of the responses and the sample sizes involved in the research; as such it may be necessary to moderate the findings based upon comparable data drawn from elsewhere. Issues particularly vulnerable to overstatement or understatement of need tend to be: household growth, house-site movement and need from unauthorised encampments. As in the Tyne and Wear GTAA, assumptions about the data might have to be made in order for the findings to be as realistic as possible based on findings from elsewhere.

### ***Accommodation need from current overcrowded, doubled up/concealed households***

It is not unusual for households to live in overcrowded conditions whether this is because of trailer over-occupancy or doubling-up on a pitch. The extent of this can be ascertained by analysis of both the survey of Gypsy and Traveller households and information held by a local authority. However, when combining this data, care must be taken not to double count the same household.

### ***Accommodation need from new household formation over the next five years***

There will be two main ways of developing an understanding of the likely future need for pitches over a given five-year period.

1. Enquiring via the survey of Gypsy and Traveller households how many (if any) people within their household, not already counted as overcrowded, will require their own independent pitch in the next five years; and
2. The demographic profile of a particular site. Those young people around 13 years of age and above will have reached the traditional age of household formation (around 18 years) in the five-year period and may be looking for independent permanent accommodation provision.

However, when combining this data, care must be taken not to double count the same household.

### ***Accommodation need as determined by site waiting lists***

Waiting lists are frequently used as a measure of expressed need for accommodation. There are particular dangers in using site waiting lists in calculating the need for site provision. These dangers revolve around both overcounting (double registrations, out-of-date lists) and undercounting (potential applicants not being registered due to a perception of no pitch availability). It is believed that using waiting lists in their entirety would entail double counting of pitch need, as a result of the other factors included in the assessment (household formation, households on unauthorised sites and doubled-up households). However, if based upon informed reasoning it may be appropriate to include a proportion of them in order to be accurately reflective of accommodation need.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Need for authorised pitches from unauthorised developments***

Nationally, more than half of planning applications are refused or are not granted on appeal, suggesting some unsatisfied demand for site development. This seems to reflect an emerging national trend.

Unauthorised developments are currently seen to be households in need of authorised, legal accommodation, whether through the granting of planning permission on their own site or pitch elsewhere. Local authorities will often be aware of unauthorised developments and be able to provide an estimate of pitches required to fulfil this need. In addition, there may be other developments which the local authority is unaware of; in this case the resident households will be able to provide an indication of pitches currently in need of regularisation.

### ***End of temporary planning permissions***

Planning permissions expected to end during the assessment period should also be counted towards the need for permanent accommodation. This follows the same reasoning as for unauthorised developments.

### ***Accommodation need from movement between sites and bricks and mortar housing***

Some Gypsies and Travellers on authorised sites would prefer to live in bricks and mortar accommodation. At the same time, some Gypsies and Travellers desire to move in the other direction, from houses to sites.

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<sup>61</sup> This follows assumptions also made by Pat Niner in *Accommodation Needs of Gypsy/Travellers in Wales*, Welsh Assembly Government, 2006.

It is incredibly difficult to provide estimations for the movement of households between bricks and mortar housing and site accommodation, for a number of reasons:

- Due to a lack of ethnic monitoring it is unclear how many Gypsies and Travellers have been housed;
- Future improvements in housing services, referrals, housing policies and practices may show bricks and mortar accommodation, in particular social housing, to be a more attractive option for some current caravan dwellers;
- If bricks and mortar housing is designed more appropriately to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers (i.e. 'Group Housing Schemes', houses with space for caravans and facilities) housing may be a more viable alternative;
- An increase in options to live on sites may provide increased opportunities for current house dwellers to leave their house and return to site accommodation (either for residential or travelling purposes);
- It may require a significantly attractive site to entice people to return to trailer-based accommodation; and
- Improvements in site conditions and management may also serve to encourage people to return to site accommodation (either for residential or travelling purposes).

However, in order to provide some indication, there are two issues to consider: housing waiting lists and allocations, and the intentions of house-dwelling Gypsies and Travellers.

The local authority may be able to provide some indicative figures around registrations for social housing by Gypsies and Travellers as well as indicative figures for housing allocations. This may provide trend-based information which may continue for the next five-year period. However, it should be considered that a move into housing or registration on a housing waiting list does not often appear to be a positive choice for the household concerned. Rather, a move into housing, generally speaking, appears to be a predominant reaction to a lack of pitch provision or the existence of inappropriate pitch provision. While there may be particular personal reasons for not wanting to move to a specific site, constrained movement into housing is more likely to be a feature of areas where sites are oversubscribed and/or where there is existing site provision for Gypsies and Travellers. If more pitches were developed, enabling positive health and education experiences, it is likely that the need for bricks and mortar accommodation would change.

At the same time, during the survey of Gypsies and Travellers, it is possible to ascertain an indicative number of people who have a desire to move into bricks and mortar housing (and vice versa).

These movements should be considered alongside one another in order to determine the proportional movement. However, because the total proportion of 'housed' Gypsies and Travellers is not yet known it is likely that this will be an under/overestimate for most local authorities.

### ***Allowance for movement between the Study Area and elsewhere***

Mainstream housing need assessments allow for net migration, usually in the base population or household estimates used. Some areas are expected to grow more rapidly than others because of positive net migration fuelled by employment opportunities or retirement, or planned expansion of housing provision. There are two main difficulties of transferring such issues to GTAAs:

- Most studies are based on interviews with a sample of Gypsies and Travellers living in the Study Area. Inevitably, such an approach cannot include people who need to, or would like to, live in the area, but are not there at the time of the survey.
- Migration and 'travelling' are often confused – and indeed the concepts seem somewhat blurred for Gypsies and Travellers. Surveys often ask about travelling patterns, but this normally identifies potential need for short-term accommodation outside the Study Area. Desire for inward movement may be picked up in interviews with families on unauthorised encampments or through analysis of site waiting lists.

It is important that migration to and from the Study Area is considered, but local authorities will need to develop their own methods for doing this. To a certain extent individual local authority GTAAs may be more successful in this, as greater concentration will be placed on the movement in and out of individual authorities.

### ***Allowance for potential closure of sites***

Plans to close existing sites will impact upon future accommodation need. The number of pitches to be affected by both the closure of public and private sites will need to be considered.

### ***Accommodation need from unauthorised encampments***

Guidance from CLG indicates that those households classified as staying on unauthorised encampments should be regarded as being in housing need. However, it is possible that as well as some households being effectively 'homeless on wheels', some households are merely passing through (i.e. cultural tradition or stop-over) or visiting the area for a particular period of time for a particular reason (i.e. work, holiday or family event). In such cases, the households concerned may already have other accommodation either inside or outside the Study Area, or have a need for residential accommodation outside the Study Area. In order to determine how unauthorised encampments

should be integrated into accommodation need it is important to develop a thorough understanding of the characteristics of unauthorised encampments in a given area. Such characteristics should include:

- Number and location of encampments;
- Encampment size;
- Encampment duration;
- Reason for encampment;
- Preferences for accommodation from unauthorised encamped households.

Information contained in the Caravan Count, information collected by the local authority or police and survey responses from Gypsy and Traveller households will be able to help determine the numbers of households with some form of authorised accommodation need (residential and/or transit).

It must be noted that this list of indicators of accommodation need appears to be the most comprehensive to date. However, as more becomes known about Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs, further indicators may be applicable.