



Planning Inequality Snapshot

Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation and the Planning System

Proud Gypsy Traveller CIC

Proud Gypsy Traveller CIC works nationally to support Gypsy and Traveller families through welfare reporting, planning advocacy and community research.

Evidence drawn from welfare assessments prepared by PGT, highlights consistent structural issues within the planning system affecting Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

The Structural Problem

Where authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites are unavailable, families are frequently left with only three options:

- overcrowded extended family sites
- roadside living and risk of enforcement
- attempting to create accommodation themselves and facing planning enforcement.

As a result, planning systems often manage the consequences of site shortages through enforcement rather than addressing accommodation need.

Planning Enforcement Cycle

Lack of authorised sites



Families unable to access lawful accommodation



Roadside living or purchase of land



Unauthorised development



Planning enforcement action



Eviction or displacement



Return to roadside living or overcrowded family sites



Cycle repeats

Evidence from Welfare Reporting

Case Example – Disability and Planning Stability

A welfare assessment undertaken by Proud Gypsy Traveller CIC involved a Romany Gypsy family with three children, including a child with severe autism who is non-verbal and requires specialist educational support.

After several years of advocacy, the family secured appropriate specialist schooling and began to establish a stable support network involving education, health services and community relationships.

However, the family continues to face planning uncertainty regarding their home.

The welfare assessment concluded that requiring the family to leave would not simply involve relocating accommodation. It would disrupt specialist education, destabilise healthcare support and undermine a fragile system of care that had taken years to establish.

Case Example – Repeated Temporary Planning Permissions

One family has lived on the same site for more than sixteen years, yet has repeatedly been granted only temporary planning permission.

Every four to five years the family must:

- submit new planning applications
- attend hearings or appeals
- disclose personal information relating to health, finances and children's education.

After more than sixteen years of stable occupation with no significant planning issues and no new sites delivered within the authority area, the repeated requirement to justify their right to remain in their home has created significant emotional and financial strain.

Case Example – Succession Restrictions

In one case a Gypsy and Traveller site was subject to a planning condition restricting occupation to named individuals, rather than to Gypsy and Traveller use.

This prevented succession within the family and created barriers when relatives sought to move onto the land for safety reasons.

Such restrictions contrast with other rural occupancy conditions, such as agricultural worker dwellings, which are typically tied to occupational use rather than named individuals.

Why This Matters

Accommodation insecurity for Gypsy and Traveller communities has wider consequences across public systems including:

- disrupted education
- mental health pressures
- safeguarding concerns
- financial strain caused by repeated planning processes.

Conversely, welfare reporting consistently shows that stable authorised sites support stronger family networks, informal care systems and improved wellbeing.

Policy Implication

Planning policy must move beyond managing accommodation shortages through enforcement and instead address the structural lack of authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Providing stable, culturally appropriate accommodation is not only a planning issue but also a public health, education and equality issue.

Proud Gypsy Traveller CIC

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Evidence drawn from welfare assessments prepared by Proud Gypsy Traveller CIC