



# MOVING FOR CHANGE

**LOCAL AUTHORITY APPROACHES TO ROADSIDE  
CAMPS IN A TIME OF COVID-19**

Adrian Jones  
National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups  
4<sup>th</sup> February 2021



# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Introduction</b>	Page 1
<b>Good Practice</b>	Page 2
<b>Evictions</b>	Page 12
<b>Conclusions and Further Actions</b>	Page 14



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

# INTRODUCTION

Between 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020, we (National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups) contacted every local authority in England with the exception of the Isles of Scilly (342 of the 343 local authorities) in order to get a better picture of the number of families who were living on roadside camps during the first “lockdown” period, and the facilities being provided to meet their needs. We received responses from 191 of these local authorities (56% of those contacted).

Given the time-lag involved in responses, it is possible that travelling families may have appeared in more than one “count”, if they moved across borough boundaries – this was not, unlike the Caravan Count, a one day snapshot. Again, unlike the Caravan Count, local authorities didn’t have to respond to our email/questionnaire (see Appendix 1) so the data we obtained is not complete (although the same could be argued with regard to the Caravan Count). Our focus is thus on good practice in terms of providing facilities to those on roadside camps so that they could remain “in situ” during lockdown rather than on the number of roadside camps.

Wherever possible, we contacted a named individual at each local authority (in most cases the Chief Executive – where we did not have existing contact details we chose the Chief Executive as responsibility for roadside camps falls under different departments in different local authorities). The survey enabled us to create a database of local authority contacts n.b. this does not cover all of the 191 responding local authorities as in many cases (especially where we had to submit FOI requests) responses came back from a central information point.

Alongside the survey, we also kept a record of local authority evictions during and post the first lockdown period. As shown below even local authorities with ‘good practice’ were, on occasion, carrying out evictions.



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

# GOOD PRACTICE

We were able to identify a number of good practice examples (on paper, at least) from the local authorities who responded to our survey and through additional contacts with local authorities outside of the survey. We would stress here that these are good practice examples as identified by the individual local authorities – the reality may, in some cases, appear to be somewhat different (see, for examples, under “Evictions” below). Some examples of “good practices” identified are detailed below:

## North

### Bradford

At the time of the survey the City Council had identified one roadside camp (three caravans, three families), stating that *“the group only arrived last week and are on Council land. In line with the guidance we have not asked them to move on. We are supporting them by providing basic welfare needs [Toilets, access to water and waste removal provided]”*.

## North West

### Cheshire

By 18/05/20 there were three encampments within the Cheshire sub-region - there had been a total of 5 during lockdown up to that date.

Cheshire West had agreed to provide an ‘accepted’ encampment on a piece of land in Ellesmere Port. They had used land for an ‘accepted’ encampment previously for seven years and there was a plan in place to use it again as and when required. This would be used for larger groups, if they were to arrive - there was room for 8-14 caravans; access to a standpipe of water, emergency lighting and portable toilets would be supplied. All the councils within Cheshire agreed at the start of the pandemic to allow encampments to stay where they were and carry out no evictions<sup>1</sup>, as well as providing services.

### Sefton

Sefton Council had no roadside camps but said *“Should a UE [unauthorised encampment] arrive in Sefton we have made arrangements to be able to supply bins and skips for refuse, and we have identified a contractor who can supply portaloos and portable shower facilities...We have adopted a COVID-19 Policy of tolerating any UEs”*.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, [https://www.chesterstandard.co.uk/news/18535238.travellers-allowed-stay-ellesmere-port-park-short-time/?fbclid=IwAR2lR7NFx9usCCBGL2iAgpFeYBkBXInHu2XMWjgWF4\\_NhUsQcONCOxMasmg](https://www.chesterstandard.co.uk/news/18535238.travellers-allowed-stay-ellesmere-port-park-short-time/?fbclid=IwAR2lR7NFx9usCCBGL2iAgpFeYBkBXInHu2XMWjgWF4_NhUsQcONCOxMasmg)



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

### Salford

In Salford, the council advised *“if the occupants of an encampment could not be accommodated on the Council’s permanent traveller [sic] site, there are a number of Council owned sites which have been considered for tolerated stopping which could relatively easily be provided with welfare facilities ...The Council does have an Unauthorised Encampment Protocol which includes a code of conduct for occupants of UE’s [sic] which we would look to be adhered to in the event that tolerated stopping was agreed on a site”*.

### North East

#### Sunderland

Sunderland City Council stated that *“We have a Policy of tolerated stopping, under normal circumstances (i.e. pre COVID-19) camps are allowed to stay for 5 days. We do not have an established temporary transit site. Written agreement in place”*. The Council’s Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration, Councillor Rebecca Atkinson, stated in the local press<sup>2</sup> that *“New Government guidance in response to the Covid-19 pandemic means the Council’s policy and ability to move on travelling groups has been temporarily suspended as all evictions have been put on hold until June 30...The Council and the police are working with the travelling groups to minimise any community impact...Each year Sunderland receives a small number of travellers and the Council responds to these “unauthorised encampments” through a policy of tolerance which provides clear guidance on how encampments are to be dealt with. This outlines that unauthorised encampments are permitted to stay for a brief period before being moved on”*.

### West Midlands

#### Walsall

A council-owned carpark was identified for use by families on roadside camps (to meet need during a Traveller funeral in the Borough), with toilets and washing facilities provided. Whilst this provision was used it ended with the eviction of those who had moved onto it (see under “Evictions” below).

#### Herefordshire

Herefordshire had five roadside camps at the time of their survey response (20.5.20) – all were currently being “tolerated”. They were on council land and had been notified verbally that they were required to move as soon as it was safe to do so.

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/politics/council/traveller-camp-wont-be-moved-until-end-june-due-coronavirus-2878344?fbclid=IwAR3nQFgnPvFy-qlu60c8hCqqlz\\_\\_Avc-VOFmfdQhzK5LhNZ9jJN\\_kUKDips](https://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/politics/council/traveller-camp-wont-be-moved-until-end-june-due-coronavirus-2878344?fbclid=IwAR3nQFgnPvFy-qlu60c8hCqqlz__Avc-VOFmfdQhzK5LhNZ9jJN_kUKDips)



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

### Warwickshire

At 13th May Warwickshire County Council (WCC) had one roadside camp on private land (relating to one small family unit consisting of two adults and a small baby). As it was on private land, the Council had been working with the private land owner to negotiate permission to get basic facilities accessible on site. In the meantime, the family had been accessing water from the local area.

Permission had been granted and if the family did not take up an alternative site they had been offered, basic facilities (sanitation, a water bowser and waste water removal) were to be arranged and provided by WCC on this private site, with the consent of the landowner. In addition, through negotiations with the landowner to enable the family to continue to reside on the private land, the Council had offered to finance basic land rent for the COVID-19 period – thus ensuring the family are safe, secure, engaged and accessing local support services, including the local health visitor which was organised through Council officers.

The Council was continuing to explore the possibility of implementing Negotiated Stopping on private land. During this process they had also identified two other potential locations which might be suitable for negotiated stopping in the future, in case the need arose and the sites were appropriate for the specific group's needs.

### East Midlands

#### Leicestershire

Leicestershire County Council gave a particularly detailed response, which is detailed in full below:

*“In Leicestershire like many counties we have a number of long term roadside families who are genuinely entirely homeless for 12 months of the year, these numbers go up and down as we find accommodation either on sites or into housing, all of these encampments are single family units and we generally have them in locations where they can be ‘tolerated’ for many months at a time, during the early weeks we had a single largish group in the area, we informed them that they should not be travelling around during lockdown and that they should stay in the location they were in or return to any site/house they may have elsewhere, for the safety of their families they chose to return to their permanent site in another part of the country as I believe many families did at that time, we had a few return and then leave again only ever stopping a few days on the many empty car parks and leaving of their own free will (as we did not give any notice), we had a another couple of large groups which had settled on private land with the permission of the land owner (in breach of planning), one group had come over from Ireland and headed straight to land they had stopped on previously, for these it was agreed that there should be no enforcement action until restrictions on movement were lifted, the land owner provided toilets and there was running*



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

*water on the land already, that group grew to almost 65 families at one point, only now is it starting to thin out moving to other parts of the UK (as they would normally) this has prevented the need for a large number of families to be roadside during this difficult time.*

*Overall this year so far we are around 25% less unauthorised encampments than last year and nearly 50% of what we saw in the first half of 2018. At the point restrictions of movement were lifted a few weeks back we saw a brief explosion of movement onto unauthorised encampments across the county with many families/groups being well known to us as they were following their 'normal' routes through the county stopping for a week or two in various locations before moving to other parts of the UK, during normal times in Leicestershire we make it clear that encampments on public open spaces will such as parks and playing fields will not in general be tolerated, this has been difficult as recently this is exactly where they have all headed to despite there being lots of empty car parks (which families were using previously in lockdown), we have in discussion with these groups extended the time that they would normally be tolerated on these types of location which has benefited all concerned, and through this we have seen a much improved compliance with keeping the land tidy and moving in an agreed timeframe without the need for enforcement.*

*With regard to the provision of facilities, we consulted our long term homeless families who all said that they had reasonable access to most things as they had family in the area and that they were happy for us to continue to collect the refuse bags that we issue out weekly, with the mobile groups they haven't stayed in one place long enough for anything more than a refuse service, in principle if a family presented in genuine need and we were able to 'tolerate' the encampment we would consider providing facilities.*

*With regard to how we manage unauthorised encampments in general and the provision of temporary sites or as you put it negotiated stopping, we have had a code of practice in place for more than 20 years now which has remained largely unaltered during this time, rather than having any kind of formal contract we issue a set of guidelines or code of conduct to what we expect families to adhere to whilst they are on an unauthorised encampments every encampment is managed on its merits this includes the behaviour (good or bad) on any previous encampments".*

### Derbyshire

Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC) had two families that had been allocated toilets and water before the lockdown. During lockdown, these were joined by three more families and they too were provided services. Towards the latter part of the lockdown, more families arrived (although there should be no movement, one family confirmed that they had been evicted from Yorkshire) and therefore an eviction notice was served. Accepted as homeless, the original two families have been provided services on another part of DDDC land.



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

### East

#### East Cambridgeshire

The Council reported that they have a *“tolerated stopping place which is safe and suggested by the local enforcement officer”*. There was a verbal agreement between family and enforcement officer. Water was provided. The Council stated that *“We have made sure they have a safe place to stay and have telephone communication”*.

#### Essex

Colchester Borough Council stated that *“there is no formally established temporary transit site. Unauthorised encampments in Colchester are managed by the Essex Countywide Travellers Unit. It has been agreed that during the COVID-19 Crisis, stopping will be tolerated, welfare checks will be undertaken and no evictions will be carried out unless it can be demonstrated that there is a severe risk to the safety of the travellers or residents.”* Essex County Council noted that *“There are currently no live encampments in any of these 11 districts/unitaries, nor on Highways land. We and Essex Police are currently operating a policy that, unless there are extenuating circumstances, i.e. danger to life based on the location, we will not take action to repossess the land during the current lock down”*.

#### Fenland

There were no roadside camps at the time of the survey but the Council had agreed in partnership with the County Council to provide water from Anglian Water (standpipes) and would consider other options if this was not feasible on any location. Again, in partnership with the County Council, they had agreed to supply Water Closet (WC) toilets of the type that would be provided for highways workers. The Council would provide the refuse service.

The Council has a transit site, with full amenities already in place. They identified/are identifying, in partnership with the County and other local Councils, temporary sites for those shielding; those isolating who cannot do so safely on a local authority site (of which they have 5); and a halting area for people still travelling.

#### Hertfordshire

Whilst it had no roadside camps at the time of our survey, the County Council stated that, *“In Hertfordshire we have a transit site. Which we could use providing social distancing can be adhered to. Should this not be possible then we would tolerate the encampment in situ. We are able to supply water, and portable toilets. Rubbish would be collected by the district council. Or if required by HCC Gypsy section.”*





## MOVING FOR CHANGE

### Cambridge

The City Council reported that they had one “tolerated” roadside camps at the time of the survey and that they were *“currently exploring whether any Cambridge City Council land could be used as a temporary site [for] unauthorised encampments set up in the city upon land they would immediately need to move from, or if Gypsies and Travellers from South Cambridgeshire District Council permanent sites would need to temporarily move to better self-isolate or better distance themselves from people on their pitches with coronavirus...We are also able to work with Cambridgeshire County Council if needed in order to identify suitable land people may be able to stay on inside the city or next to it for during the duration of the pandemic whilst the advice from government is not to travel”*. N.b: in a follow-up e-mail, the Council stated *“please note that at the time of writing the FOI we had completed a welfare assessment for the unauthorised encampment but had not made decision as to whether enforcement was proportionate or reasonable. The City Council has since issued a S77 Notice requiring the Travellers to leave the site by 29th May”*.

### North Lincolnshire

The Council stated that whilst it had not established a temporary transit site, it was providing portable toilets and water bowsers to roadside camps and said that *“sites will remain until after the Covid-19 lockdown and the welfare needs are resolved”*.

### Peterborough

No roadside camps had been identified but *“the local authority has identified two emergency stopping places for use. When in use the Local Authority will supply water, waste and toilet facilities”*.

## London

### Croydon

In their survey response, the Council noted that it *“continues to engage all families who come to the borough and employ negotiated stays with all groups - where possible - outside of the Injunction areas. Upon arrival an officer will conduct a welfare check and establish their needs and how long they intend to stay. Under the current COVID-19 regulations moving such families can create a non-essential journey and as such we are working with them to set a preferred departure date.*

*The Council has always considered negotiated stops with groups who come into the borough. We understand and respect the gypsy [sic] and traveller [sic] way of life and feel this approach is best practice as it enables officers to freely engage with the families and opens up lines of communication which may not have happened if the Council resorted to an enforcement based approach”*.



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

### South East

#### Canterbury

Canterbury City Council which is known for a “robust approach to unauthorised encampments” agreed to set up a temporary site complete with standpipes and chemical toilets in the New Dover Road Park and Ride area<sup>3</sup>.

It was thought that by allowing travelling families to stay in one location, the vulnerable in the community would have better access to health care which in turn would help to reduce any potential spread of the virus. Families were to be allowed to remain for the duration of the pandemic providing a strict set of rules were followed – this list aimed to prevent anti-social behaviour, damage to the site and going “to the toilet in the open”. Anyone found to be in breach of these rules would be evicted.

The Council’s Chief Executive Colin Carmichael said:

*“This temporary change to our approach has been sparked by a change to the national guidelines of dealing with traveller [sic] encampments.. If this crisis has taught us anything, it is that those who are not normally vulnerable and in need of help quickly become so because of the disruptive power of the virus.. We need to put the normal rules of engagement to one side in order to ensure everyone gets the help they deserve.. Coronavirus has shown us time and again it does not discriminate and to beat it nor should we.. Travellers arriving on our land in the district will be directed to this site if their presence is causing a problem and we will use our normal processes to evict them if they refuse to head to New Dover Road.. If they are not causing any problems, we will keep in touch with them but not move families on.”*

At the time of our survey there were two roadside camps within Kent that were being allowed to stay where they were, with facilities provided for them. Kent County Council and the individual district Councils had a “toleration policy” on roadside camps remaining whilst the lockdown is in place and this was felt to be working well. The County’s approach was one of “tolerated stopping on areas of Highways/KCC Land by KCC and most of the other district councils within Kent, however both Canterbury City Council and Thanet District Council have or in the process of providing access to ‘temporary negotiated stopping places”.

### South West

#### Bristol

Bristol City Council put in place two temporary sites for vehicle dwellers in the City (comprising of fifty pitches), as a result of the movement restrictions put in place due to

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.kentlive.news/news/kent-news/kent-coronavirus-canterburys-park-ride-4052328>



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

COVID-19. Both sites had access to WC, shower facilities and drinking water. Both sites were extremely well used. Access to them was free to people living in vehicles currently living in Bristol. This comprised of a range of different communities covering New Travellers, homeless people living in caravans as well as people who live in vehicles and work in the City, but do not travel. Some people living in vehicles also chose to go into hotel accommodation provided by the City Council.

Gypsy and Traveller families could go onto the two temporary sites but none did so. Gypsy and Traveller families could also access the Council's permanent transit site in the City, with three vehicles moving onto it at the time of our survey. As a result, there were 13 vehicles owned by Gypsy and Traveller people on the transit site – of 20 pitches available for use on that site seven were still vacant. A Council official stated that "I suspect if the Transit site had been full and there had been the demand, the City would also have created even more spaces than it currently has. The one UAE in Bristol which I included on my return, did not want to move onto the Transit site as the family was self-isolating [n.b. the local authority provided the family with a bin. The family hired a portable toilet themselves. Access to drinking water was provided for free by the leisure on whose car park they were located".

### Cornwall

In their survey response, Cornwall stated that *"very quickly, as part of our emergency response to Covid-9 [sic], we put in place a temporary policy for unauthorised encampments, recognising that members of the Gypsy & Traveller community would be very vulnerable to the virus, especially if they were not on a properly facilitated site. The policy we have put in place followed the guidance set out by Friends, Families and Travellers and recommends that where possible, we would direct an unauthorised encampment to our transit site. If this was occupied, we would seek to tolerate in the current location if it was safe to do so and if it was not deemed safe, we would ask the families to move to the nearest piece of land where it was safe to tolerate them. In addition, we would seek to provide water, toilets and waste collection, subject to being able to access providers who could provide them.*

*At the current time, there are no known unauthorised encampments that we are working with. This does not mean there are none: there may well be unauthorised encampments tolerated on private land that we are not aware of but nobody has approached us for help or assistance or reported any concerns".*

### Mendip

Mendip Council stated that *"during the government lockdown on travel during the Coronavirus outbreak, we have provided male and female portacabins, (one for every 24 people of each gender), and a water bowser".*



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

### Somerset

Somerset West and Taunton Council detailed a county-wide approach to “Provision for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in Somerset” on their website on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020<sup>4</sup>. This states that:

*“The challenges of COVID-19 have a greater impact on people from Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, particularly around the ability to follow government guidance around travel, access to clean water, social distancing and self-isolation. In Somerset a multi-agency group was formed to ensure a county-wide response to these concerns. This group is represented by Avon and Somerset Police, Community Council for Somerset, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue, Mendip District Council, NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton District Council, and South Somerset District Council. The group has considered national guidance and recommendations set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to ensure that all parts of our society are kept safe during this time.*

*Across Somerset, we will endeavour to ensure that anyone already in Somerset or those arriving in Somerset will be provided with a safe place to stay. This could mean accommodating people where they have stopped by providing basic sanitation and support around adhering to national guidance, or relocation to one of the temporary sites in direct response to the pandemic that are being set up around Somerset.*

*A temporary stopping facility for the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma community is being established at Enfield Car Park in Tangier, Taunton. This facility will be available from Monday 6 July and is likely to remain in place until October. The current use of the site as a public car park will be suspended temporarily.*

*The temporary stopping facility will provide access to clean water and sanitation. Household waste will be collected daily. There will be controlled access to the site. There is other similar provision elsewhere within the county.*

*It is important to stress that this is a public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the health of everyone currently in Somerset is paramount, be those travelling communities or those living in settled communities, and to avoid preventable deaths.*

*As national restrictions are relaxed, we are committed to working with people within the Gypsy, Traveller or Roma communities to ensure that they are able to move on safely within the sphere of the national guidance.*

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/covid-19-provision-for-gypsy-traveller-and-roma-communities-in-somerset/>



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

*In the meantime, all agencies involved will be providing support to anyone currently travelling through Somerset and the communities around them”.*

### Plymouth

While Plymouth City Council did not respond to our questionnaire they did contact us by e-mail to state that *“We have a GRT Policy that we would like to review following our experience of implementing a Negotiated Stopping Site<sup>5</sup> during COVID-19 crisis and we would really appreciate some advice and guidance from yourselves, and the GRT community. We would like to gather the views of the GRT community and support for proposals moving forward in terms of securing future provision as we have found identifying sites, and gaining support challenging in the past”.*

A Plymouth City Council spokesman is quoted on the Plymouth Live website<sup>6</sup> as saying: *“We are aware of an encampment at Prince Rock playing fields...During the coronavirus pandemic, it is important to support Government directives for all communities. To deliver this, negotiated places have been identified for the Gypsy, Roma and Travelling [sic] community to use if visiting the area. Prince Rock Playing Fields is one of these spaces. In line with national guidance, we will not be moving the camp on. The camp have been provided with facilities and we have carried out a welfare check. All occupants appear well. We will resume the normal legal processes when we can.”*

### South

#### Havant

The Council noted that *“we currently have one Unauthorised Encampment in Havant although the site has become an agreed stop - Fewer than five families, five caravans, some twenty people. Portales and water bowser provided by Local Authority. Agreed a temporary stop at an agreed site. Met and agreed that group would relocate to a suitable site for their needs to enable LA to offer support. Verbal agreement based on a weekly review”.*

---

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/plymouth-news/travellers-will-not-moved-on-4146844>

<sup>6</sup> As above



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

# EVICCTIONS

The other side of the coin to good practice in terms of helping to ensure that those on roadside camps can remain ‘in situ’, is the use of eviction to move families on. However, an important point to make here is that while we are (obviously) opposed to a blanket *“if they're here we'll evict them”* policy, in some cases the grounds for eviction may be valid - even if this is the case, however, this does then pose the question *“If you evict people from X where will they be able to go?”* (eviction from one site can simply result in those evicted setting up a roadside camp elsewhere in the Borough as was, for example, clearly the case in Coventry). Individual cases need to be looked at on an individual basis. There is a real danger that the behaviour of the small minority of ‘antisocial’ families will be used to ‘queer the pitch’ for travelling people in general.

From the date of the first lockdown, we are aware of several local authorities evicting roadside camps. In a number of cases there have been multiple evictions within single local authority areas. These include Ashfield (Notts), Kirklees, Leicestershire (also identified under “Good Practice” above), Shrewsbury, and Walsall (as with Leicestershire<sup>7</sup>, also identified under “Good Practice” above) and Watford. Of particular note is Coventry<sup>8</sup>, where we are aware of at least five evictions between 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020 – this example is particularly interesting as the Council reportedly has a vacant permanent site (at Siskin Drive)<sup>9</sup>, although this no longer appears on the Caravan Count.

It is very clear that the number of roadside camps (and, consequently the number of evictions) increased dramatically when the Government’s message changed from “Stay Home” to “Stay Alert”. Travelling families generally responded well (where it was possible for them to do so) to the call to “Stay Home”. Between 23<sup>rd</sup> March and 10<sup>th</sup> May (the period when the Government was advising people to “stay home” – a period of 47 days), we are only aware of nine evictions taking place<sup>10</sup>. In the 45 days following the change of message to “Stay Alert”, we are aware of 39 evictions taking place – an increase of 333.3%. This pattern of increased use of evictions continued through the summer months, although we

---

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, [https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/police-move-travellers-who-set-4067058?fbclid=IwAR3eywIE\\_sS6DwovvJgRISX4TBDWWNqmtqf8zbMo2esgd8UV8WDxDFIXLgI](https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/police-move-travellers-who-set-4067058?fbclid=IwAR3eywIE_sS6DwovvJgRISX4TBDWWNqmtqf8zbMo2esgd8UV8WDxDFIXLgI) and <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/travellers-told-leave-after-pitching-4197773?fbclid=IwAR0KME-AqSptaLHDrlA8oJpZprxo-K1jPKjuZZZyQtgsv55AhFyDT4e7Fnw>

<sup>8</sup> See, for example Coventry Live of 13.11.20 (<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/landowner-take-action-after-travellers-19276952>) where it is also stated that *“In the last five years the authority has spent £229,730 on legal fees, repairs and clean-up operations on handling unauthorised encampments”*

<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/new-traveller-defences-installed-coventry-18633514>

<sup>10</sup> The caveat here is that we acknowledge that there may have been evictions of which we are not aware



## MOVING FOR CHANGE

are aware of a number of Councils citing Lord Greenhalgh's April letter to local authority Chief Executives<sup>11</sup> as grounds for not carrying out evictions<sup>12</sup>.

---

<sup>11</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/929125/COVID-19\\_-\\_mitigating\\_impacts\\_on\\_gypsy\\_\\_\\_traveller\\_communities.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929125/COVID-19_-_mitigating_impacts_on_gypsy___traveller_communities.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18517175.travellers-moved-waterhall-patcham-place/#:~:text=TRAVELLERS%20have%20been%20moved%20to,Brighton%20and%20Hove%20City%20Council.> and <https://theisleofthanetnews.com/2020/06/17/thanet-council-notified-of-traveller-encampments-in-ramsgate/>



**MOVING FOR  
CHANGE**

## **CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER ACTIONS**

It is apparent from our survey that several local authorities across England had taken steps to enable those on roadside camps to remain where they were. There is also evidence of growing use of (and interest in) some form of 'Negotiated Stopping' (although local authorities may, in some cases, use different terminology). To build on this momentum we have been taking the following actions:

- Working with the Local Government Association and MHCLG to produce a joint webinar promoting 'good practice' approaches to roadside camps;
- Promoting Negotiated Stopping via our links with MHCLG and other Government departments;
- In order to dissuade local authorities from following the eviction route, pushing for a re-issuing of Lord Greenhalgh's letter to local authority Chief Executives<sup>13</sup>;
- Working with individual local authorities (e.g. Wiltshire County Council, Warwickshire County Council, Walsall Borough Council and Plymouth City Council) that have approached us for advice;
- Promoting Negotiated Stopping across Europe (with particular focus on Belgium, France and the Netherlands) via the European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) network, contacts in other mainland European organisations and the Council of Europe.

---

<sup>13</sup> n.b. a follow-up letter was sent out on 10<sup>th</sup> November:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/935042/Lord\\_Greenhalgh\\_Letter\\_to\\_LA\\_CEOs\\_November\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/935042/Lord_Greenhalgh_Letter_to_LA_CEOs_November_2020.pdf)





**MOVING FOR  
CHANGE**

## **Appendix One: Roadside camps mapping: questionnaire and accompanying letter**

Dear Chief Executive

I'm sure that you will be aware of the letter sent by Lord Greenhalgh, Minister for Communities to local authority Chief Executives to highlight the fact that some members of Gypsy and Traveller communities are likely to be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, and may need support in accessing basic facilities such as water, sanitation and waste disposal, to enable them to adhere to public health guidelines around self-isolation and social distancing during the outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mitigating-impacts-on-gypsy-and-traveller-communities>

While noting, in his letter, that "it is for Local Authorities to determine how best to support vulnerable groups during this unprecedented period in line with their public health responsibilities", Lord Greenhalgh goes on to state that "to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health guidance on hygiene requirements, access to basic facilities is essential. This might involve the provision of additional temporary water, sanitation and waste disposal facilities to those currently lacking access to these, or making alternative stopping places available, such as transit sites, suitable local authority land, and holiday campsites which may have closed and have established facilities"

In order to get a better picture of the number of families who are living on Unauthorised Encampments during the current "lockdown" period and the facilities being provided to meet their needs, we are sending the brief questionnaire below to every local authority in England. We would be most grateful if you could forward this to the relevant person/department. The completed questionnaire should be returned to the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups at [natglg@outlook.com](mailto:natglg@outlook.com)

Yours faithfully

Adrian Jones

Policy Officer, National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups



**MOVING FOR  
CHANGE**

## **Appendix Two: Roadside camps mapping questionnaire**

Do you have any Unauthorised Encampments (UE) at the moment in your borough or district? If so, how many?

How many families are on these encampments + number of caravans and number of people?

Are there basic services on site (e.g. water and toilets)? If so, what are these

Are you as a local authority providing these? If not, who is providing them?

Have you formally established a temporary transit site or are you using a different form of provision (e.g. tolerated stopping) - if the latter, please detail)?

Is there any agreement in place written or verbal being the Council and those living on the UEs? (if there is a written agreement could you please attach a copy of it to your reply)

Name of Person Completing this:

Name of Local Authority:

Date of completion:



# MOVING FOR CHANGE

We exist to improve the quality of life for nomadic Gypsies and Travellers and the communities in which they live across the UK.

Contact us

[hello@movingforchange.org.uk](mailto:hello@movingforchange.org.uk)

[www.movingforchange.org.uk](http://www.movingforchange.org.uk)

07873 904 738

Registered Company Number: 12418885