

CUMBRIA COUNTY

Six District

Gypsy and Traveller
Strategy

2010

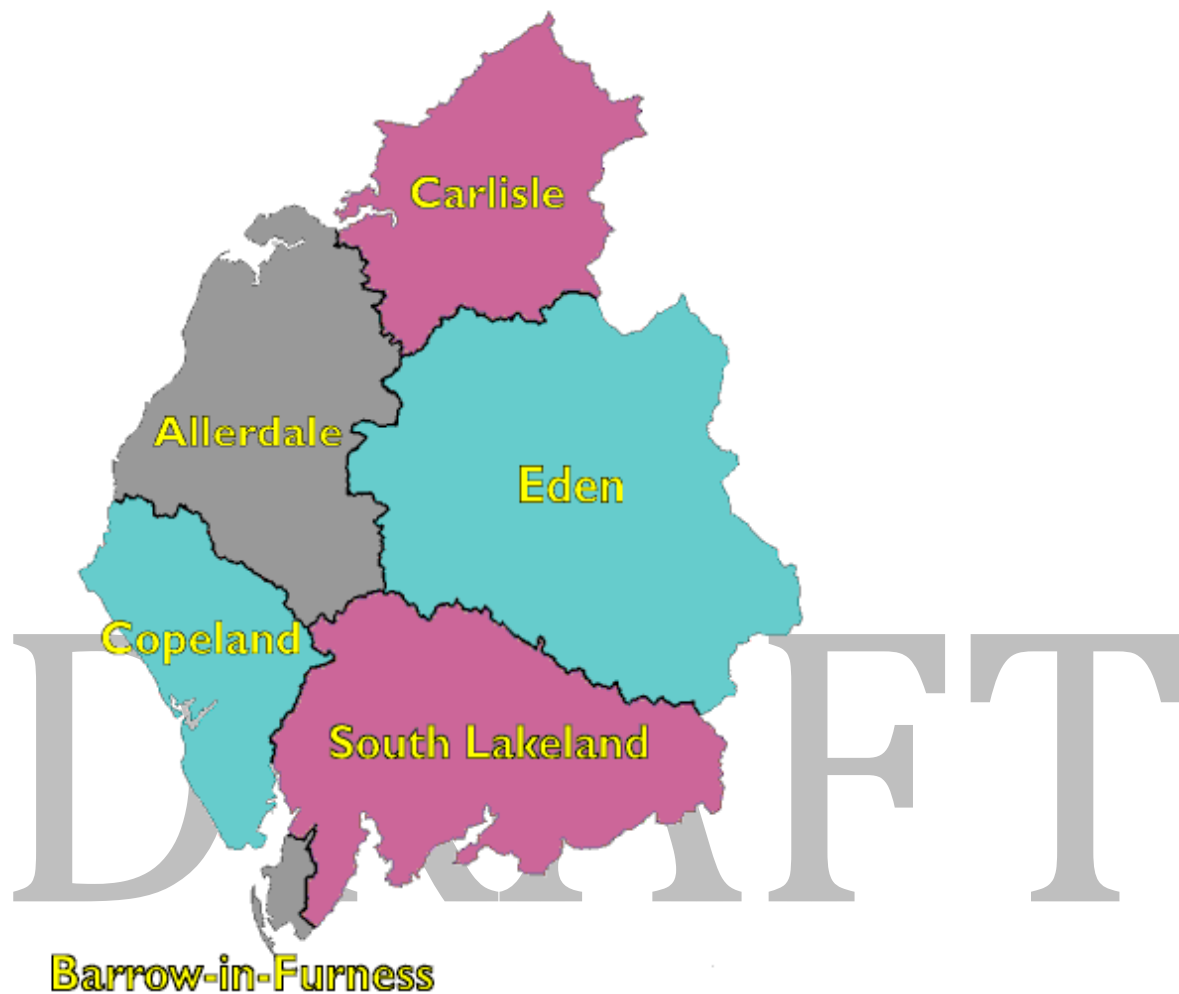
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gypsies and Travellers have been part of the community in Cumbria for hundreds of years. However, little has been researched or documented to be able to properly account for how many Gypsy and Travellers actually reside in our area, especially those who have moved into permanent accommodation, what needs, whether aspirational or otherwise, there are and what services are available to this sector of our community.

This Strategy is the first to be produced that covers the whole of Cumbria. It was born out of the need to look at a joined up approach to supporting this sector of our community to ensure equality for all.

DRAFT

INTRODUCTION



This Strategy sets out the vision and objectives for the six districts of Cumbria for the next five years (financial years 2010/11 through to the end of 2015/16). The 6 local authorities in Cumbria that have been involved in the writing and consultation of the document are Allerdale Borough Council, Barrow Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, Copeland District Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council. Throughout this document the term Gypsies and Travellers encompass Gypsies (Romany), Irish Travellers, Scottish Gypsy Travellers who are recognised ethnic groups under race relations legislation and Showmen and New Travellers who are not recognised under race relations legislation.

This is the first strategy specifically written for Gypsies and Travellers covering all six districts in Cumbria and could be the first in depth strategy in the North West.

It has been apparent through the work undertaken to look at Gypsy and Traveller site provision that little had actually been done to engage with Gypsies and Travellers in seeking their views on service provision based on needs, and also with regard to the number of Gypsies and Travellers that are in Cumbria.

CONTEXT

The lack of suitable, secure accommodation underpins many of the inequalities that Gypsy and Traveller communities' experience. Planning policy has shifted away from publicly owned sites, which local housing authorities administer, to self-provision by the communities themselves. Disputes often arise when Gypsies and Travellers apply for planning permission to develop a site on land they have purchased privately. Opposition from local residents frequently leads to local authorities turning down planning applications, though many are successful on appeal. In addition to private site development, the Government has allocated money to local housing authorities to develop new sites or refurbish old ones. However, the extent to which local authorities and registered social landlords access such grants varies considerably and is often dependent upon political will and changing local circumstances. Evidence is now available about the extent of provision and unmet needs, as a result of the requirement for housing authorities to carry out formal accommodation assessments. These highlight a considerable shortfall in the quantity of residential and transit accommodation available to Gypsies and Travellers who do not wish to reside in conventional housing, or that have an 'aversion to bricks and mortar' accommodation.

Provision on a minority of sites is of good quality. On others however, the location of sites can be poor (for instance under motorways, on landfill or next to sewage works and railway stations).

Many Gypsies and Travellers are caught between an insufficient supply of suitable accommodation on the one hand and the insecurity of unauthorised encampments and developments on the other, they then face a cycle of evictions, many linked to intimidation and threatening behaviour by private bailiffs. Roadside stopping places, with no facilities and continued instability become part of the way of life. Health deteriorates and severe disruptions occur to access to education, healthcare services and employment opportunities. It should be noted that some Gypsy and Traveller families would prefer to remain mobile rather than become 'settled' on an authorised site.

Racism and Discrimination

Racism towards most ethnic minority groups is now hidden, less frequently expressed in public and widely seen as unacceptable. However, that towards Gypsies and Travellers is still common, frequently overt and seen as justified. Abusive media coverage and overtly racist statements from local and national politicians add to the ignorance and prejudice of many members of the settled population, while those in authority frequently fail to challenge them. It is documented of complaints of members of the communities of services being not welcoming or refused; employment offers being withdrawn and of people being harassed in or dismissed from employment (EHRC Research Report 12).

VISIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY THAT MEET THE VISIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE 6 DISTRICTS IN CUMBRIA

The Vision for this Strategy is:

1. A Cumbria where Gypsies and Travellers have equality of opportunity with other members of the community to enable them to access services provided by agencies, working together in an inclusive, cohesive and transparent manner.

The Objectives that will help us meet this Vision:

1. To standardise the method of collating data on Gypsies and Travellers to provide information to enable existing services to be reviewed and developed where necessary.
2. To identify where new services are needed and how those can be provided.
3. To work with Gypsies and Travellers and local communities to promote better understanding and mutual respect.
4. To work with the media to encourage balanced coverage of Gypsy and Traveller issues.

The Vision and Objectives have been drawn up to complement those of all the six districts across Cumbria.

Definition of Gypsies and Travellers

For the purposes of the Strategy the definition of Gypsies and Travellers includes those recognised as racial groups under the Race Relations Act (RRA). These are Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Scottish Gypsy Travellers.

*"The term Traveller suggests a homogenous group of people and immediately misinforms us. There are no single group of Travellers. Travellers is a collective term for all those ethnic minority, business, professional and cultural communities who travel for work purposes, or who keep travel as an optional and key reference point in their lives even when they are settled. In their own communities the families who may assert their specific identities as Gypsy (English and Welsh), Traveller (Irish), Gypsy Travellers (Scottish), Showmen (Fairground) and Circus."*¹

Gypsies and Travellers in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom there are generally held to be five main types of Travellers:

1. Gypsy Travellers – these include those that are born into a Gypsy Traveller family or who have married into a Gypsy Traveller family.
2. Showmen and Circus Travellers consider themselves as being part of a commercial or business community rather than an ethnic group.
3. Bargees are those living on boats. *
4. New Age Travellers who are a diverse grouping with varying beliefs and backgrounds and who live a nomadic existence.
5. Irish Travellers and Travellers of Irish Heritage.

*Please note that this group is not included in this current Strategy

¹ The Education of Gypsy and Traveller Children Christine O'Hanlon and Pat Holmes, 2004

Patterns of Travelling

There is still work to be done to determine the up to date travelling patterns of our Gypsy and Traveller communities in Cumbria, as many of the traditional routes have been eroded over the years due to lack of suitable stopping places. We can only go on the information provided on unauthorised encampments, which is by no means complete as it does not account for the sites used by Gypsies and Travellers where they have not been moved on. However, we do know that the Travelling communities includes:

- Those that maintain a nomadic life;
- Those that now lived in permanent housing, but still travel;
- Those based on private authorised sites;
- Those based on unauthorised sites.

Language, Culture and Economic Development

Gypsies originated in India, were first recorded in England in 1505 and thought, incorrectly to have come from Egypt and called 'Egyptians'. This was shortened to 'Gypsy'.

Gypsies are self-sufficient and in general work for themselves. The families are supportive of each other and there is a strong community spirit. Because of the prejudice and racism that Gypsies and Travellers are often subjected to, they tend to trust only members of their family, and are suspicious of outsiders. Children are brought up to be independent and from an early age may go to work with an adult member of the family or close community. If greater tolerance within our communities is the aim and the settled community is to respect the lifestyle of Gypsies and Travellers, it is equally important that Gypsies and Travellers tolerate and respect the lifestyle and property of the settled community. As part of the Action Plan we have included strategies for achieving this goal.

Gypsies used to live in barrel top caravans or vardos often pulled by the traditional Gypsy Cob. These days, trailers (caravans) are more in evidence and the traditional way of life is often only shown at the horse fairs that take place across Britain, our own being Appleby Fair that takes place in June each year.

Gypsies also have their own language called Romani/Romanes. For Romani speaking Gypsy populations, use of the language is essential. Among some Australian, American or European Romani groups for example, you will be excluded from certain functions if you cannot participate using the Romani language.

After the Second World War many Gypsies and Travellers found employment on farms. Today farm work is not so readily available and Gypsies have had to move with the times. Today, totting or collecting scrap and hawking, which includes laying tarmac, landscape gardening and selling/repairing cars are all ways to earn money. This is why the settled community often believe Gypsies and Travellers to be untidy. Some of course are, but it can also be because vehicles, gas canisters etc are waiting to be broken down to sell on or as parts, or to be made into other useful objects. Gas canisters can be cut down to make wood-burner stoves. In order to support themselves, Gypsies and Travellers have to move often in order to find work. It should be noted however, that

some of these activities can directly affect health due to the lack of health and safety provision and in some cases such activities are illegal. Gypsies and Travellers need to ensure that they are complying with appropriate legislations and such work should be more closely monitored.

Travellers also include Irish Travellers, who are a known nomadic group since 400AD with their own language and culture. In 400AD, the Tinkers travelled through Ireland. They were blacksmiths and belonged to the Irish society, but they had an alternative lifestyle.

Historical Time Line

0400 AD

5th Century Itinerant Irish smiths travelled and produced ornaments and weapons for room and board. Gmelch 1977, p. 9;

Pastoral economy, mobile clientage patterns, and itinerant groups: poets, bards, doctors, musicians, jesters, gamblers, merchants and craftsmen were commercial nomads. (Helleiner 1995:535.) Part of Irish society; an alternative economic scheme;

1100

12th Century writings of Giraldus Cambrensis mentions mobility in Irish society.

1175

Tinker and *Tynkere* began to appear in Ireland in written records as trade names or surnames. Gmelch 1977, p. 9

1243

English law passed to control the "wandering Irish" (Kendrick 1979: 1)

1300

'Tynker' and 'Tynkler' common trade names in Ireland (Gmelch 1977)

1413

Henry V passed law to curtail the Irish Travellers (Kendrick 1979: 1)

1422

Henry VI passed law to curtail the Irish Travellers (Kendrick 1979: 1)

1500

Mobility and Itinerancy taken as evidence of 'barbarism' of Irish people (as was religion, kinship and political practices, and was used to justify the colonial enterprise (Canny 1976:126-28, cited in Helleiner 1995:535.)

1500

16th Century: "Several writers have attributed the failure of Gypsies, who were also metal workers, to become established in either country [Scotland and Ireland] at this time as due to the stiff competition they met from native tinkers." (Gmelch and Gmelch 1976:227)

1505

First record of "Egyptians" in UK (Scotland) (Versey-Fitzgerald 1973)

1514

First record of "Egyptians" in England (V-F 1973)

1550

English colonial writings mention goals of civilizing the Irish by controlling their mobility. (Helleiner 1995:535). Tutor reconquest--Irish wanderers viewed as potential leaders or followers of the lords and chieftains who resisted domination.

1550

16th Century: Shakespeare's *Henry V* (2.4): Prince Hal claims to be able to "drink with any tinker in his own language." (Ní Shúinéar 1994: 62)

1552

King Edward VI: "Acte for Tynkers and Pedlers . . . no person or persons commonly called tynker, pedler, or petty chapmen shall wander or go from one towne to another or from place to place out of the towne, parish or village . . ." (Gmelch and Gmelch 1976: 228)

1562

Death Penalty introduced in England for those calling themselves "Egyptians" or dressing in "Egyptian" garb. Thompson 1928

1575

Sir Henry Sidney executed itinerants at court in Cork. He extracted promises from lords and chieftains not to hire 'idle men' (Canny 1976: 104-5).

1600

Late 16th Century/early 17th Century English officials (in Munster and in Connacht) continued to execute 'loose and masterless men' (Canny 1976:106,113).

1619

The Irish Wars: Thomas Gainford noted the "gravers in gold and silver called plain tinkers." (Gmelch and Gmelch 1976: 227)

1632

September 15, 1632: "a true inventory of all ye goods credits and chattels of Nicholas Leigh a Tinker-errant," Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society 1977:177)

1672

1672-1680: accounts kept by a vicar in County Antrim (from Irish Travellers Resource Collection): "references to 'tinklars' or 'tinkers', and of transactions with them; for example he describes the annual visits of a family group to the rectory, begging food and clothing, and mentions the women as being strikingly distinct from the general population, with very dark hair and eyes and brightly coloured plaid skirts." (Ní Shúinéar 1994:64)

1700

18th Century Ireland: mass evictions of cottiers and labourers as colonial landlords turned from tillage to pasture. Summer travel as migratory farmworkers (*spaleens*) as wives begged at doors. Itinerant craftsmen also still present. Gmelch 1977, p. 10

1831

1,545 male "tinkers" and "brassworkers" over age of 20 (1831 Census).

1834

Royal Commission on the Poor Laws estimate of 2,358,000 beggars and their dependants in Ireland (1/3 total pop.); an informant told the commission "Ordinary beggars do not become a separate class of the community, but wandering tinkers, families who always beg, do. Three generations of them have been seen begging together." (quoted in Gmelch and Gmelch 1976:228)

1841

835 "tinkers" (1841 Census)

1851

468 "tinkers" (1851 Census)

1891

1,851 people "working and dealing in tin" (1891 Census) [in Helleiner 1995]

1900

Irish cultural nationalism gives over to Irish separatist nationalism: hegemony of the Catholic bourgeoisie and middle-class ideology and morality; Travellers as not moral or acceptable.

1922

Irish Free State: Catholic bourgeoisie as model for the homogeneous ideal of Ireland. Travellers did not fit the ideal, and the perceived differences were stereotyped (i.e., "immoral, land-less, untrustworthy, irreverent") (Helleiner 1995)

1960

In 1963, the assimilation and "ethnicisation" (Gmelch 1989) of Travellers began. Rationale: return the social dropouts to their place in settled society. (Helleiner 1995)

1970

The mid 70's academics (Gmelches) describe Travellers as an ethnic group

1980

The mid and late 80's: Traveller and non-Traveller groups open discourse for the ethnic and racially distinctiveness of Travellers (Joyce and Faramer 1988; McCan, et al 1994)

1989

Gypsies (Romany) recognised as an ethnic group under race relations legislation

1990

Anti-Traveller racism was being discussed openly (Dublin Travellers Education and Development Fund 1992)

2000

Irish Travellers recognised as an ethnic group under race relations legislation.

October 2008

Scottish Gypsy Travellers recognised as an ethnic group under race relations legislation.

It should be noted that the term "Tinker" is now used in a derogatory way.

Different groups of Gypsies and Travellers do not usually co-habit and tend to keep to their own communities. It is therefore difficult to engage with Travellers as a whole as

they include many different groups with varying beliefs and ideals. However, as part of the Strategy and Action Plan, those working with Gypsies and Travellers will continue to involve and consult wherever possible in order that when providing services they are providing such a service where need has been established.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

In May 2004, the residents of the ten countries joining the EU acquired the right to move freely between all the member states. However, since May 2004 two further countries joined the EU, namely Bulgaria and Romania on 1 January 2007. Roma and other Travellers are amongst those able to move to the UK. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) Gypsy and Traveller Strategy noted that these groups have little in common with Britain's indigenous Gypsy and Traveller populations, as most Roma and Travellers from other EU countries are not nomadic and have experienced 'enforced' settlement for over 60 years.

Although according to the experts it is unlikely that we will ever see large scale immigration due to Roma being settled in their local area, those who wish to migrate have probably already done so or they are far more likely to be working and trading in countries nearest them. In order for us to know the extent of any migration into Cumbria we still would need to improve our housing monitoring systems, and include Gypsies and Travellers within any work carried out with regard to Asylum Seekers and Refugees. This is important in order that we are aware of not only the needs and future requirements of Gypsies and Travellers, but also the needs of any Gypsies and Travellers who are also asylum seekers, in order that we can plan for service delivery when they are granted refugee status.

ACTION PLAN:

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (as amended by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994) states that 'Gypsies' means, "*persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, but does not include members of an organised group of travelling showmen, or persons engaged in the travelling circuses, travelling together as such*". Case law has also excluded from the definition those people that move from place to place without connection between their movement and their means of livelihood. Some Gypsies have now given up their nomadic habit of life and settled on caravan sites. Such people continue to be Gypsies because of the tradition from which they come.

Human Rights Act 1988 – Article 8 of Schedule 1 to the Act is of major importance in connection with the home of a Gypsy or Traveller. 'Home' can include a caravan even if it is unlawfully or illegally parked. Therefore Article 8 applies to those persons on unauthorised encampments as well as tenants of authorised caravan sites. Article 8 states that:

1. *Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.*
2. *There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic*

society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, of the rights and freedoms of others.

Article 14 also applies, the right of prohibition of discrimination:

'The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property or other status.'

Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites (ODPM Circular 1/06)

The main intentions of the Circular are:

- a) *to create and support sustainable, respectful and inclusive community where gypsies and travellers (sic) have fair access to suitable accommodation, education, health and welfare provision; where there is mutual respect and consideration between all communities for the rights and responsibilities of each community and individual; and where there is respect between individuals and communities towards the environments in which they live and work;*
- b) *to reduce the number of unauthorised encampments and developments and the conflict and controversy they cause and to make enforcement more effective where local authorities have complied with the guidance of this Circular;*
- c) *to increase significantly the number of gypsy and traveller (sic) sites in appropriate locations with planning permission in order to address under-provision over the next 3-5 years;*
- d) *to recognise, protect and facilitate the traditional travelling way of life of gypsies and travellers (sic), whilst respecting the interests of the settled community;*
- e) *to underline the importance of assessing needs at regional and sub-regional level and for local authorities to develop strategies to ensure that needs are dealt with fairly and effectively;*
- f) *to identify and make provision for the resultant and inclusive policies and to ensure identified need is dealt with fairly and effectively;*
- g) *to ensure that DPDs include fair, realistic and inclusive policies and to ensure identified need is dealt with fairly and effectively;*
- h) *to promote more private gypsy and traveller (sic) site provision in appropriate locations through the planning system, while recognising that there will always be those who cannot provide their own sites; and*
- i) *to help avoid gypsies and travellers (sic) becoming homeless through eviction from unauthorised sites without an alternative to move to.*

Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 - The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, Section 318. This Section confers security of tenure and assignment upon tenants of Gypsy and Traveller sites, giving similar rights to those in 'bricks and mortar' housing

and in line with the Mobile Homes Act 1983. Enactment of Section 318 has been postponed until the General Election 2010 has taken place. However, local authorities in Cumbria should be working towards conferring the same rights to tenants on any new site provision, as those in 'bricks and mortar' social housing.

Unauthorised Encampments

Unauthorised encampments remain the main area of conflict between the settled and the Gypsy and Traveller community. The initial response to unauthorised encampments is one of negotiation and if unsuccessful, is followed by due court processes. Use of criminal sanctions should be a last resort and only following discussions with local prosecutors and Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officers and local authority officers.

Unauthorised Encampment Policy

Cumbria Constabulary has a draft policy, February 1010, which outlines their response to unauthorised encampments, namely:

- Responding to concerns over public safety and reassuring local communities
- Informing partner agencies or any unauthorised encampment, its location and number of people involved
- Working with partners to ensure satisfactory resolution to unauthorised encampments
- Collecting and sharing information with partners
- Dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour according to policy
- Work with neighbouring police forces to ensure unauthorised campers should be able to expect similar treatment and high level of service

All Police decisions and actions will be made in accordance with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1988. Any action will only be necessary for public safety, the prevention of crime and disorder, the protection of health, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

The grounds for each decision will be fully recorded by the decision maker and kept for audit processes or legal challenge for seven years.

Actions should be the least intrusive to achieve the purpose.

Responses should involve consultation with all partners and the police use of powers seen as being necessary, only in exceptional circumstances:

- A decision should be made as to whether police resources should be deployed to the site
- If deployed to the unauthorised encampment, a 'site' risk assessment should be conducted. An agreement about 'acceptable behaviour' should be struck with the occupiers, if appropriate

- If the 'site' is deemed as acceptable, no further police action needs to be taken other than reassurance patrols where necessary
- If the 'site' is deemed as not acceptable, negotiations need to begin for the occupiers to leave the site. This should include an unauthorised camper's needs assessment
- If negotiations fail, court action or the use of police powers should be considered

However, it is recognised that where a policy of eviction exists there should also be a policy of accommodation in place. Failure to do so will result in continued unauthorised encampments in areas that are unacceptable.

What are the factors that may lead to a need for moving Gypsies or Travellers?

This list is not exhaustive, and a case may have special consideration of its own. Factors that may be crucial in one case are considered on its own merits, but many of the factors could be irrelevant in another. Each case is considered on its own merits, but many of the factors would need to be present to a fairly significant degree before action was justified. The main factors are:

1. The land is needed for another use and must be kept available in case it is needed quickly.
2. Use of neighbouring land is unusually sensitive and the presence of Gypsies or Travellers is detrimental to that use.
3. Unreasonable interference with the access to nearby land.
4. Unreasonable interference with highway rights.
5. Danger to highway users.
6. Unreasonable restriction of access to public utility companies' equipment or damage to that equipment.
7. Unreasonable use of land for non-residential activities.
8. Unacceptable effect on nearby water courses.
9. Damage to land or crops.
10. Danger to public health.
11. Unreasonably large encampment for the location or tendency to grow beyond acceptable limits.
12. Unauthorised presence on or adjacent to official sites (action will always be considered in this case).

13. Unauthorised presence causing or likely to cause economic loss.
14. Use of land neighbouring land for the dumping of hazardous industrial waste, drug related waste or other noxious waste.
15. Unreasonable interference with land used for educational, charitable or leisure purposes.
16. Unreasonable interference with business or residential activities on the land or on neighbouring land.
17. Unreasonable interference with the rights and freedoms of others.
18. Unreasonable use of the land for the dumping of business or domestic waste.

County and District Powers

The County Council, district local authorities and the Police have a joint protocol for dealing with unauthorised encampments. This is an agreement to treat each encampment on its own basis and to resolve issues through agencies working together with Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community. Use of criminal sanctions should be the last resort and only following discussions with local prosecutors, the police and local authority officers. The County and districts have the following powers to move on unauthorised Gypsy or Traveller encampments:

1. Section 77 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 gives local authorities the power to direct persons to leave and remove any vehicles and property. If a direction is not complied with a Magistrates Court Order can be obtained, under Section 78 of the 1994 Act, requiring the removal of any person on the land together with vehicles and property. On average it usually takes five working days to obtain such an order. If a person fails to comply with such a direction or if he complies but then re-enters the land within a period of three months, an offence is committed under the 1994 Act that is punishable by way of a fine.
2. Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 – this allows a local authority to remove any trespasser from school property if that person is causing a nuisance or disturbance to the annoyance of the persons who lawfully use those premises. This section can be used whether or not it is term-time and immediately the practical arrangements for removal are in place. A court order is not necessary to remove persons using this section.
3. Section 143 of the Highways Act 1980 gives power to a highway authority to remove, on one month's notice, any structures set up on a highway. The definition of a structure includes a caravan or vehicle and a court order is not necessary to use this section.
4. A possession order can be obtained in the civil courts requiring the removal of any trespassers from property and on average the procedure takes between two and three weeks.

5. Common Law Eviction – where trespassers occupy land, the owner is not, at common law, obliged to go to the courts to obtain possession. He can lawfully eject such trespassers provided that he uses no more force than is reasonably necessary. This power can be used as soon as the practical arrangements for removal have been made provided the trespasser has been asked to leave. Police should be advised well in advance, and will normally attend.
6. The incorporation of the Convention into United Kingdom law by the Human Rights Act 1998 has increased challenges regarding breaches of Gypsy Traveller rights, particularly examination of the powers contained within sections 61 and 62 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. The use of Section 62A to Section 62E of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act is rarely enforced by police and it would ‘seem unlikely that the police will be able to implement S62A until local authorities provide sufficient sites for them’ (Gypsy and Traveller Law, C Johnson & M Willers, 2007).

POLICING

The Cumbria Constabulary is there to provide a service to the communities in which they work. Under an overarching theme of community engagement Cumbria Constabulary and Police staff provide a visible presence and point of contact for action and reassurance on issues of crime and antisocial behaviour. This is true for both the ‘resident’ and ‘Gypsy and Traveller’ communities.

The Cumbria Constabulary is represented on the Cumbria Equality and Diversity Group, a multi agency partnership that works on a range of issues at both policy and local management level.

Unauthorised Encampments and the role of the Police Service

Because of the role of the Police in many of the enforcement activities that can follow from the establishment of unauthorised camps, the Gypsy and Traveller community view the Police with a degree of mistrust and feel that they suffer from Police harassment and prejudice.

Similarly many of the settled resident communities in Cumbria can feel frustration with the Police response to unauthorised encampments arising from a misunderstanding of the Police role.

The establishment of an unauthorised encampment on private, public or common land will usually be a ‘civil trespass’, provided that no criminal offences have been committed in establishing the encampment, the Police have no powers to intervene and responsibility for negotiation and progressing with eviction lies with the landowner.

If criminal offences were committed, by any party during the process of negotiation or eviction the Police would take appropriate action. The Police also have powers under Common Law to deal with breaches or potential breaches of the peace.

Under Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 a Senior Police Officer attending an incident of trespass does have the power to order trespassers to leave land as soon as practicable if certain conditions are met. These include, but are not limited to, threatening behaviour to a landowner or their family or representative, or damage to the land or property on the land. It should be noted that use of these powers is a severe measure typically resulting in families being moved at short notice without provision for alternative arrangements. Because the Police are required to be proportionate in their response to any given circumstances this power can only be used in exceptional circumstances.

Salford University who carried out the GTAA gave a best estimate of 771 Gypsies and Travellers in Cumbria. However, the Travelling communities acknowledge that this is a gross under-estimate.

Working on the assumption that a family unit consists of 5 individuals:

There are currently 74 pitches within the boundaries of Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council. This equates to an estimated number of 470 individuals.

The GTAA identified a need for a further 89 pitches, which equates to an estimated number of 445 people.

This gives a total estimated number of **915** Gypsies and Travellers in Cumbria, again this may well be a gross under-estimate until statutory agencies start to ethnically monitor Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Scottish Gypsy Travellers as recognised ethnic groups under Race Relations legislation.

ACTION PLAN: To strengthen links with the Gypsy and Traveller communities; improving and broadening ways that members of these communities can access Police services. Ethnic monitoring.

POLICY AND STRATEGIC LINKS

There are few strategies that include Gypsies and Travellers within their contents. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) published 'Gypsies and Travellers: A Strategy for the CRE 2004-2007' in 2004. Gypsies have been recognised as an ethnic group in England by the Race Relations Act 1976 since 1989, Irish Travellers since 2000 and Scottish Gypsy Travellers since 2008. The CRE prior to merging with the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission to form the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published a Report entitled 'Common Ground – Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers', 2006. This Report looked at how the Race Equality Duty, as it relates to Gypsies and Irish Travellers, was addressed by local authorities and the police. One of many recommendations to local authorities was that they should '*develop a holistic corporate vision for all work on Gypsies and Irish Travellers and anchor it within the community strategy, the local development framework and any other relevant strategy...*'

A further recommendation was to 'Review all policies on accommodation for Gypsies and Irish Travellers, to ensure a long-term, co-ordinated and strategic approach that promotes race equality and good race relations. This should include policy on planning

and providing sites, managing authorised and unauthorised encampments and conventional housing, and be supported by data collection and consultation with local communities. Strategy on accommodation should be linked to wider service areas, such as health and education and to a communications strategy’.

Gypsies and Travellers are included within various Acts of Parliament in terms of policing and management of unauthorised encampments. These include the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 that changed the duty that local authorities had to provide sites under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. This was changed to a discretionary power.

Regional Strategies

Cumbria-Wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Group, Cumbria Equality and Diversity Group etc, expand.

ACTION PLAN:

Organisational Network in Cumbria Relating to Gypsies and Travellers

Input and expand.

THE ROLE OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

Parish and town Councils in Cumbria contribute an essential ‘grass roots’ consultative role, as well as having responsibility for a variety of local services. With regard to unauthorised encampments they are often the ‘eyes and ears’ of the agencies with responsibilities for dealing with the issues. In many cases, it is the local parish council who first raise questions about unauthorised camping. Parish and Town Councils have a significant role to play in partnership with other tiers of local government and the police; both as part of the pre-planning process of identifying short stay stopping places and in helping to manage short stay stopping places in conjunction with the district/borough or County councils. ‘Common Ground’ recommended (not exhaustive):

- Designate a councillor at cabinet (or equivalent) level and an officer at no less than assistant director level, to co-ordinate the authority’s work on sites (authorised and unauthorised), to make sure it is consistent across departments and is linked to its work on equality
- Require all monitoring officers to advise all councillors of the authority’s statutory duty to promote race equality and good race relations
- Consider on an ongoing basis whether decisions, actions or omissions by officers, councillors and committees affecting Gypsies and Irish Travellers meet the duty to promote race equality and good race relations
- Emphasise that the code of conduct for councillors applies to their work in relation to all racial groups, including Gypsies and Irish Travellers and make sure that any actual or potential breaches of the code reported by the authority’s monitoring officer are fully investigated by the standards committee, or another appropriate formal mechanism

ACTION PLAN:

BACKGROUND TO GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS IN CUMBRIA

Racism towards most ethnic minority groups is now hidden, less frequently expressed in public, and widely seen as unacceptable. However, that towards Gypsies and Travellers is still common, frequently overt and seen as justified. Abusive media coverage and overtly racist statements from local and national politicians add to the ignorance and prejudice of many members of the settled population, while those in authority frequently fail to challenge them. Complaints abound from members of the communities included in this review: of services being not welcoming or refused; of employment offers being withdrawn; and of people being harassed in or dismissed from employment. While Gypsies and Travellers have experienced such hostility for centuries, what is remarkable – and shameful – is this continues in the present day, despite a wealth of legislation to promote equality and human rights and protect against discrimination.

Inequalities and Problems²

The following points highlight a few key areas of concern from among the severe, wide-ranging and mutually reinforcing inequalities and problems faced by members of the Travelling communities. It is by no means an exhaustive list:

- Gypsies and Travellers die earlier than the rest of the population
- They experience worse health, yet are less likely to receive effective, continuous healthcare
- Children's educational achievements are worse, and declining still further (contrary to the national trend)
- Participation in secondary education is extremely low: discrimination and abusive behaviour on the part of school staff and other students are frequently cited as reasons for children and young people leaving education at an early age
- There is a lack of access to pre-school, out-of-school and leisure services for children and young people
- There is an unquantified but substantial negative psychological impact on children who experience repeated brutal evictions, family tensions associated with insecure lifestyles, and an unending stream of overt and extreme hostility from the wider population.
- Employment rates are low, and poverty high
- There is an increasing problem of substance abuse among unemployed and disaffected young people
- There are high suicide rates among the communities
- Within the criminal justice system – because of a combination of unfair treatment at different stages and other inequalities affecting the communities – there is a process of accelerated criminalisation at a young age, leading rapidly to custody. This includes: disproportionate levels of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders against Gypsies and Travellers, instead of the use of alternative dispute resolution processes; high use of remand in custody, both because of judicial assumptions about perceived risk of absconding and lack of secure accommodation; prejudice

² Inequalities Experienced by Gypsies and Travellers, Research Report 12, EHRC

against Gypsies and Travellers within pre-sentence reports, the police service and the judiciary; and perpetuation of discrimination, disadvantage and cultural dislocation within the prison system, leading to acute distress and frequently suicide

- Policy initiatives and political systems that are designed to promote inclusion and equality frequently exclude Gypsies and Travellers. This includes political structures and community development and community cohesion programmes
- There is a lack of access to culturally appropriate support services for people in the most vulnerable situations, such as women experiencing domestic violence
- Gypsies' and Travellers' culture and identity receive little or no recognition, with consequent and considerable damage to their self-esteem

The only way of determining how many Gypsies and Travellers there are in Cumbria is by using the figures that are given by local authorities in the Bi-Annual Caravan Counts. The counts take place twice a year in January and July. The count is based only on the number of caravans (not individuals) on the day of the count. It does not include Gypsies and Travellers living in houses.

Gypsies and Travellers living on authorised council or privately owned sites are more easily counted and this is evidenced from several pieces of research. It has been reported that those Gypsies or Travellers who are nomadic or who have moved into permanent housing are difficult to count. One reason for this is because application forms for housing do not include monitoring of Gypsies or Travellers; even if this changed some may still be reluctant to disclose their status for fear of discrimination or abuse.

The lack of systematic ethnic monitoring of Gypsies and Travellers who use public services, often underpins the lack of hard evidence about the nature and extent of the problems they face. Within the education sector, the introduction of specific monitoring categories has enabled the Government to identify inequalities, and to impress upon local education authorities the need to address these concerns. The Race Equality Duty similarly requires public sector organisations and services to monitor the impact of their policies to identify: how their policies affect racial groups; the extent of satisfaction of people from all groups with the way they are treated; whether the provision of services is effective for all communities; and whether the design of services is suitable to meet different needs.

Caravan Count 16 July 2009 - Cumbria						
Authority	Socially Rented	Private	Land Owned by G&Ts Not Tolerated	Land Not Owned by G&Ts Tolerated	Land Not Owned by G&Ts Not Tolerated	Total
Cumbria	0	127	1	11	40	179
Allerdale	0	0	0	0	40	40
Barrow	0	14	0	0	0	14
Carlisle	0	87	1	0	0	88
Copeland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eden	0	26	0	11	0	37

South Lakeland	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	179					

The above is taken from the GTAA Final Report for Cumbria. However, it should be noted that Barrow Borough Council does have a private site, that is currently licenced for 19 pitches but was omitted in the final report.

Other relevant studies include: PCT Health Survey, South Lakeland DC small-scale survey underway. Allerdale BC commissioning a survey May – July 2010.

ACTION PLAN:

EXISTING GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS SITES

Local Authority Authorised Sites

Until April 2010 there has been no local authority authorised sites in Cumbria. However, Carlisle City Council were successful in receiving funding from the then Communities and Local Government's (CLG) Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant for £1.5m to develop a new site, to address a proportion of the accommodation needs as identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2008 (GTAA). The new site at Lower Harker Dene opened end March 2010 and provides 15 pitches out of the 39 pitches identified for Carlisle City Council.

The GTAA³ identified a need for 89 pitches across the 6 local authority districts in Cumbria to be provided between 2007-2016 with a further 35 transit pitches identified, also to be provided across the County.

	Study Area Total	Allerdale	Barrow-in-Furness	Carlisle	Copeland	Eden	Lake District NP	S Lakeland
Current authorised residential provision⁴ (pitches)	112	24	0	39	0	44	0	5
Additional residential need 2007-2012 (pitches and plots)	71	19	5	32	1	8	0	6
Additional residential need 2012-2016 (pitches and plots)	18	4	1	7	0	5	0	2
Additional suggested transit need 2007-2016 (pitches and plots)⁵	35							
Estimated total additional residential pitch/plot need 2007-2016	89	23	6	39	1	13	0	8

*112 was reduced to 92 in the GTAA Final Executive Summary 2008

³ Cumbria Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, Salford University, May 2008

Private Authorised Sites

There are 4 private authorised sites in Cumbria according to CLG Bi-annual Caravan Count, with 40 caravans placed on land owned by Gypsies and Travellers but not tolerated. Planning permission is often difficult to obtain and some Gypsies or Travellers purchase land prior to obtaining planning. Then their planning applications can be turned down. Large areas of Cumbria have been identified as being of importance with regard to nature conservation and areas of outstanding natural beauty, and along with providing affordable housing there is intense competition for land.

Analysis of the time-series data in England however, demonstrates clearly changing patterns of site provision in recent years, with a slowing (or decrease) of public site provision and the greatest increase in pitch numbers occurring through planning permission granted for private site applications. Over 90 per cent of planning applications for private (usually self- or family-owned) Gypsy sites are refused at first hearing, often following orchestrated campaigns by aggrieved (sedentary) local residents, though permission is overwhelmingly granted on appeal (CRE, 2006a; Williams, 1999).

ACTION PLAN:

Roadside Stopping Places

There are currently no roadside stopping places in Cumbria, however Cumbrian Districts and the Police have a 'toleration' policy in not enforcing move on if the 'site' is secure and safe for both the residents on the stopping place and the settled community.

ACTION PLAN:

Access and Provision of Accommodation

It is not always the case that Gypsies and Travellers will want to live in houses. Many Gypsies and Travellers wish to continue as nomads in a pattern of travelling they have been accustomed to. Some Gypsies and Travellers may wish to travel and stay on the roadside or they may wish to spend several weeks or even months in one place. Some Gypsies and Travellers have indicated that they wish to have a more settled life without the fear of eviction and being moved on and would like to base themselves on managed sites or live on their own land. Some Gypsies and Travellers wish to live in permanent housing. It is important therefore that within this Strategy we investigate all routes into accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. The clear preference for Gypsies and Travellers, as identified in the GTAA, was for a small private site which they/their family owned, followed by a family owned house.

Access to Renting Authorised Privately Owned Pitches

Need to explore and fill in detail.

Access into Council or Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Accommodation

It is estimated that between half (Niner, 2003) and two-thirds of the Gypsy and Traveller populations of the UK live in housing (CRE, 2004). Emerging GTAA findings

indicate that over half of these people report that they either became housed as a result of inadequate site provision and exhaustion caused by a constant cycle of eviction, or that health or educational concerns for family members led to moving into housing.

RSLs, HAs in Cumbria – expand.

Gypsies and Travellers are able to apply for social housing on an equal basis to all other applicants. However, many Gypsies and Travellers who are looking for settled housing encounter considerable delays and many of them feel disadvantaged by housing allocation policies.

In terms of homelessness status a Gypsy or Traveller is homeless if there is no place where he or she is entitled or permitted to place his or her caravan or vehicle (HA 1996 s175(2)(b)).

Some GTAAs and other research studies indicate that housed Gypsies and Travellers find it extremely difficult to approach local authority staff for advice or assistance in completing forms, partly through embarrassment or a lack of knowledge over where to go (Home & Greenfields, 2007; LGTU, 2001; Shelter, 2007).

In a 2007 Shelter report on housed Gypsies and Travellers, respondents referred to experiencing discrimination and racist abuse from neighbours, anxiety and depression caused by feeling 'trapped', a sense of lack of control over their environment and extreme social isolation, all of which could lead to breakdown of housing placements. The loss of close family support and of the immediate proximity of relatives and friends who have been known all of one's life and can offer support, friendship and protection from potentially abusive neighbours (or at least minimise the fear of such abuse) have been reported as a major problem for newly housed families in numerous GTAAs, health and other studies (Richardson et al, 2007; Parry et al, 2004; Van Cleemput et al, 2007; Shelter, 2007; Greenfields, 2002; LGTU, 2001; Power, 2004).

ACTION PLAN: A Working Group will be set up to look at ways to improve access into services for those with low levels of literacy

ACTION PLAN: Instigate improved monitoring of Gypsies and Travellers in order to identify ethnicity, especially when accessing housing and agency support. All agencies should amend their housing application forms to include Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Scottish Gypsy Travellers as recognised ethnic groups. Local authorities should ensure, when setting their models for choice-based lettings, that they consider the needs of those with low levels of literacy and those who do not have access to the Internet. Further input.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE

Supporting People is a government arrangement for administering subsidy for housing support. The only SP contract for this client group is the one that Carlisle City Council has with the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Funding has never previously been allocated to this group until after the GTAA in 2008/9. A study regarding the experience as a

report to come out when the contract ends its first year in October 2010 is currently being considered to include lessons learnt etc.

ACTION PLAN:

LOCAL AUTHORITY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Government advice to local authorities is to avoid unnecessary evictions of Gypsies and Travellers and to 'tolerate' unauthorised sites for short durations where there are no public health problems, anti-social behaviour and/or criminal activity associated with the encampment.

Trespass is not a criminal offence and it is for the landowner (private or public) to decide when and whether to take action to have people evicted through court action. The court will only grant the order, if it thinks it lawful to do so. The court will determine the date the eviction order becomes effective, this may be immediate or may be delayed.

Duties and guidance that local authorities should consider:

Circular 18/94 – Toleration Policy which makes it clear that encampments must be 'tolerated' while needs assessments are carried out. Otherwise 'toleration' will be dependent upon the circumstances of each individual encampment.

Circular 1/06 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites – It is important for LPAs to make adequate Gypsy site provision in their development plans through the appropriate use of locations and/or criteria-based policies.

Definition of sites:

Transit (or short stay possibly roadside)

- Refuse collection point
- Access to drinking water
- Sewage disposal
- Drained/stable surface

Temporary

- Refuse collection point
- Convenient drinking water
- Sewage disposal
- Surfaced entrance

Long Term

- Regular refuse collections
- Drinking water supply to each property
- Sewage disposal to each property
- Surfaced entrance and access road
- Hard-standing for vans and vehicles

- Work spaces
- Domestic/drying area
- Play area
- Electricity
- Washing facilities
- Pitches demarcated
- Visitors space

Even if LPAs are successful in providing suitable sites, there may well be occasions when unauthorised encampments arise. Generally, these will be dealt with under the CJPOA 1994, except in those particular circumstances where the encampment takes place with the agreement or acquiescence of the landowner. [Add here and quote various CLG Guidance, Task Force etc]

ACTION PLAN:

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

It is acknowledge that rubbish left by Gypsies and Travellers is unacceptable. However, the local community also dumping their rubbish can often exacerbate this. However, the public perception is that Gypsies and Travellers do not pay Council Tax and should therefore not benefit from services.

Gypsies and Travellers have moved around Cumbria for hundreds of years and it is only over the last 20-30 years that rubbish nuisance has become or is perceived as a problem. [Appleby Fair is different, needs elaboration] This is often a direct result of the types of businesses carried out by Gypsies and Travellers and the constant requirement to move on. It is a matter of education, providing sufficient, suitable and appropriate facilities and communication with local people and Gypsies and Travellers that will improve the situation. It is noted that in areas where encampments have been 'accepted' and facilities provided the Gypsies and Travellers are more than happy to pay for any facilities that the local authority provides.

Regular collection of the waste is essential as a swift clear up of vacated sites to remove nuisances and to prevent opportunistic littering by the settled population.

ACTION PLAN:

- Ensure a prompt response is made to any unauthorised encampment to assess any welfare needs, to ascertain why Travellers have 'pulled on' and the possible length of stay to ensure appropriate waste disposal
- To provide rubbish bags or skips, porta-loos and water butts, at a cost to the Travellers

HEALTH SERVICES AND GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

The Policy Context

Reducing health inequalities has been placed alongside health gain as a core objective of Government health policy in recent years. Building on the Acheson Inquiry (1998), a series of policy documents have focused on prioritising public health, shifting the policy focus from sickness to health and wellbeing, and developing measures to tackle the

underlying determinants of poor health as well as enhancing primary and secondary prevention to facilitate a reduction in inequalities (Department of Health (DH), 2004a, 2004b).

Health, social and education agencies are required to demonstrate that they have taken account of different needs and inequalities within their local populations (DH, 1999, 2002, 2004c; Wanless, 2004). As 'Tackling Health Inequalities' (DH, 2003) makes clear, addressing inequalities involves making mainstream services more responsive to the needs of disadvantaged populations.

The white paper 'Choosing Health' expressly contained a commitment to empowering people to make healthy choices by providing support and information when required and by fostering environments in which healthy choices are easier to make. It indicated that this process should be underpinned by three guiding principles: informed choice, personalisation and partnership working between service providers and users (DH, 2004c).

Equality legislation also requires all public sector agencies to carry out race, disability and gender equality impact assessments of their policies and services (under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; Disability Discrimination Act 2005; and Equality Act 2006).

The net effect of the policy framework is an explicit drive to address the wider determinants of health: lifestyle, education, income, employment, housing, crime and environment. This is to be achieved through systematic review and the development of partnerships between voluntary and statutory agencies.

Health, Substance Abuse and Self-Harm

Studies have found that the health status of Gypsies and Travellers is much poorer than the general population. Parry et al (2004) found that, even after controlling for socio-economic status and comparing to other marginalised groups, Gypsies and Travellers have worse health than others: 38% of a sample of 260 Gypsies and Travellers had a long-term illness, compared with 26% of age- and sex-matched comparators. Significantly more Gypsies and Travellers reported having arthritis, asthma, or chest pain/discomfort than in the comparison group (22, 22 and 34%, compared with 10, 5 and 22% respectively). They were over three times more likely to have a chronic cough or bronchitis, even after smoking status had been taken into account.

Mobility problems were reported by 25% of Gypsies and Travellers compared to 15% of the comparison group. Saunders (2007) reported a high prevalence of diabetes and a lack of community knowledge of risk factors or of the implications of having the condition.

An outreach project in Wrexham noted that when compared to a control group of residents from a deprived local area, Gypsies and Travellers had lower levels of exercise, a significantly poorer diet (particularly in respect of fresh fruit and vegetables), and had far higher rates of self-reported anxiety and depression (Roberts

et al, 2007). It also found that the risk of premature death from cardiac disease was particularly high for Gypsy and Traveller men. In the Dorset Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA), 39 per cent of a sample of 89 New Travellers reported poor health, in some cases related to addiction, and including chronic liver conditions associated with substance abuse (Home & Greenfields, 2006). Health care staff reported that patients commonly present with more than one condition (Parry et al, 2004).

It is frequently reported that Gypsy and Traveller women live 12 years less than women in the general population and Gypsy and Traveller men 10 years less than men in the general population (Crawley, 2004; Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), 2004). However, these statistics were extrapolated from data on Irish Travellers based upon health surveys and census data in Ireland (Barry et al, 1987).

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the life expectancy of Irish Travellers in Ireland is still disproportionately inequitable, with recent findings from Eire indicating that just 30% of Travellers live beyond their 60th birthday (Brack & Monaghan, 2007). Few comparable data sets are available in Britain.

However, a Baseline Census conducted in Leeds (M Baker MBE, 2005) found that the average life expectancy of Gypsies and Travellers was 50 years of age, 25 years less than that of the settled community. Although this was a small-scale survey the information extrapolated was validated by Sheffield Hallam University and undoubtedly, if conducted elsewhere, would proffer a similar result.

The Dorset GTAA (Home & Greenfields, 2006 b) found that 10% of Irish Travellers aged over 60 years and 22% of Romany (English) Gypsies were of retirement age or above, all of whom were resident in housing or on authorised sites – indicating that linkages exist between secure accommodation and life expectancy. The lower life expectancy in Irish Traveller populations may result from poorer health status and an increased tendency to reside on unauthorised sites or in housing.

The life expectancy of Irish Travellers in Ireland is still disproportionately inequitable, with recent findings from Eire indicating that just 30% of Travellers live beyond their 60th birthday (Brack & Monaghan, 2007). It should be acknowledge that Irish Travellers reside and resort to Cumbria and these findings should also be taken into account when reviewing and providing access to health services.

Only limited evidence exists on the health status and life expectancy of Showpeople but where GTAA data is available, it would appear that members of this population have generally better health and a longer life expectancy than Gypsies or other Travellers. A number of Showpeople were amongst the oldest people interviewed for GTAA's, generally reporting fairly good health and regular social contact. The longer life expectancy of Showpeople (broadly in line with the mainstream population) is likely to be a product of greater access to suitable accommodation, the tendency to live with relatives on private sites who are able to provide support and care, and the higher economic status of the majority of retired Showpeople.

Poor quality or inappropriate accommodation, including a result of forced movement, inevitably exacerbates existing health conditions as well as leading to new problems

(Van Cleemput, 2008a). Higher infection rates have been reported, linked to poor sanitation and poor access to clean water, particularly on roadside sites (and specifically not linked to a lack of knowledge or cleanliness) (Neligan, 1993).

The proportion of Gypsies and Travellers living on roadside sites in the UK who had no, or limited, access to clean water was found by Feder (1989) to be between 14% and 30% depending on location. Similarly, between 33% and 58% had no access to water or chemical toilets. In addition, the effects of a lifetime of physical hard work and stress should not be underestimated when considering the likelihood of premature mortality (Parry et al, 2004). Van Cleemput et al (2007, p. 207) found that 'Elderly participants suggested that the wet and damp endured during years of living on the road in all weathers had had a detrimental effect on their health, with many blaming these conditions for their arthritis and chest complaints'.

Health Needs

Gypsies and Travellers should have access to the same range of health and social services as the rest of the population. These services include:

- Contraception (cultural mores should be considered when addressing this issue)
- Care of mother and new-born baby
- Childhood immunisation/minor illnesses/development
- Adult illnesses/accidents
- Referrals to GPs and dentists
- Referral to hospital department
- Paramedical services eg physiotherapy, chiropody
- Welfare services eg DSS, Housing, Legal Services

FACTORS THAT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTH EXPERIENCES OF GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

Difficulty in Accessing Health Care

Despite greater health needs, Gypsies and Travellers use mainstream health services less than other members of the population (Hawes, 1997; Jenkins, 2004;).

Some of the reasons for this involve practical difficulties, such as complex procedures for registering and accessing services (Lynch, 2006), while the isolation of sites can create problems in accessing dentists and opticians (consultation response from the Citizens Advice Bureaux).

Lawrence (2007) highlighted problems faced by Gypsies and Travellers in accessing health services such as minor injuries units and immunisation programmes. NAHWT suggested that 'the most common problem for Travellers is difficulty in accessing primary care through GPs because of their insistence in having a permanent address'. Some GPs only register families as temporary residents, resulting in exclusion from a range of services, such as screening. Others allegedly refuse to register Gypsies and Travellers at all (NAHWT response).

The Scottish Executive (2001) found there was little advocacy support for Gypsy Travellers who have difficulties in accessing health services.

Cultural concerns and an intense fear of particular health conditions (particularly cancer) led many of the respondents in Parry et al's (2004) study to avoid seeking preventive care or screening, potentially leading to a cycle where, by the time a condition was identified, the prognosis was poor (see also Dion, 2008).

In a study of attitudes to healthcare and patterns of attendance among Gypsy women in Europe, Lehti and Mattson (2001) identified cultural factors that could potentially impact on willingness to attend for treatment, in particular strict rules of gendered behaviour, such as an unwillingness for women to discuss intimate or sexual/reproductive health issues with male care providers. This is also relevant to indigenous Gypsies and Travellers who share the same cultural mores.

Women in Kent similarly reported detrimental health impacts as a result of being unable to access female medical staff when living at roadside locations (Richardson et al, 2007). Strongly held cultural taboos can influence relationships with doctors of the opposite sex and feelings about medical examinations. Lehti and Mattson also noted that the hierarchical cultural patterns which privilege males and elders in decision-making and defining appropriate behaviours, meant that health-related behaviours could be influenced by community or family members even when their advice or beliefs were inappropriate, a point reiterated by Dion (2008) in the context of children's eating habits.

Until relatively recently, the use of drugs was virtually unknown in Gypsy and Traveller communities. Within the past fifteen years or so, health and education staff, community workers, voluntary sector agencies and community members themselves have anecdotally reported increasing levels of drugs use amongst men (and some women), with a wide age-range at first use of illicit substances, from teenagers to people in their 30s. The Policy and Strategy group of the National Association of Teachers of Travellers noted that 'Traveller Education Services comment on increased awareness of both use and dealing in street drugs on Traveller sites and in the [Traveller] communities'. [Cite Health CD 'Ladged No Longer' and others]

Adverse Environmental Conditions

Conditions where Gypsies and Travellers often have to live are also detrimental to health. Sites are often located on landfill, near busy road/motorways, rubbish tips or on industrial sites. Basic amenities such as water, electricity or waste collection services are often not available. Sites can also be near to unfenced water or derelict buildings and there are often no safe play areas for children. These conditions can be found on LA authorised sites as well as unofficial sites.

ACTION PLAN:

Health Services for Gypsies and Travellers in Cumbria

PCT Report 2009 – expand.

ACTION PLAN:

SOCIAL SERVICES

Social Services in Cumbria provide a wide range of services to adults, children and their families from a number of locations.

Expand on current service provision.

ACTION PLAN:

TRAVELLER EDUCATION SERVICE (TES)

Each LEA in England and Wales has the responsibility to make appropriate education provision for all children of statutory school age that live in or reside to the Authority. This duty therefore encompasses Traveller children.

Expand.

Although many schools are providing a positive and inclusive education for Traveller pupils, there remain a few cases where the attempt to avoid addressing the particular needs of Travellers amounts to 'cultural blindness' that conflicts with policies on equal opportunities. Expand on current situation within Cumbria.

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) draws attention to the responsibilities of a LA to 'eliminate contradictions between their written policies on inclusion and race equality and their practice in dealing with temporary encampments of Traveller families'.

ACTION PLAN:

OTHER AGENCIES WORKING WITH GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS IN CUMBRIA

[List and input]

ACTION PLAN:

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND USEFUL WEBSITES

[After comment by all districts, current and relevant legislation will be referenced and included]