



Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments

What to expect from your local council

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Introduction

Local councils must plan housing for all parts of their communities. This includes Gypsy and Traveller communities.

We made this guide to help everyone understand their rights and what councils must do.

Everyone should get fair and equal chances to good, safe housing.

Local councils must meet the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities by law.

This guide explains how local councils should carry out Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments.

These assessments check the housing needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities in their area.

About Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessments

It's the council's job to provide mobile home sites for Gypsy and Traveller communities in their area.

It is important that Councils work with Gypsy and Traveller communities and find out what they want.

Sometimes Gypsies and Travellers live in bricks-and-mortar housing but would prefer to move to a gypsy and traveller site that suits their way of life.

The council must support people with these needs.

It is essential for councils to carry out this assessment. It helps them plan for what is needed.

As part of the assessment, councils must write a report for Welsh Government.

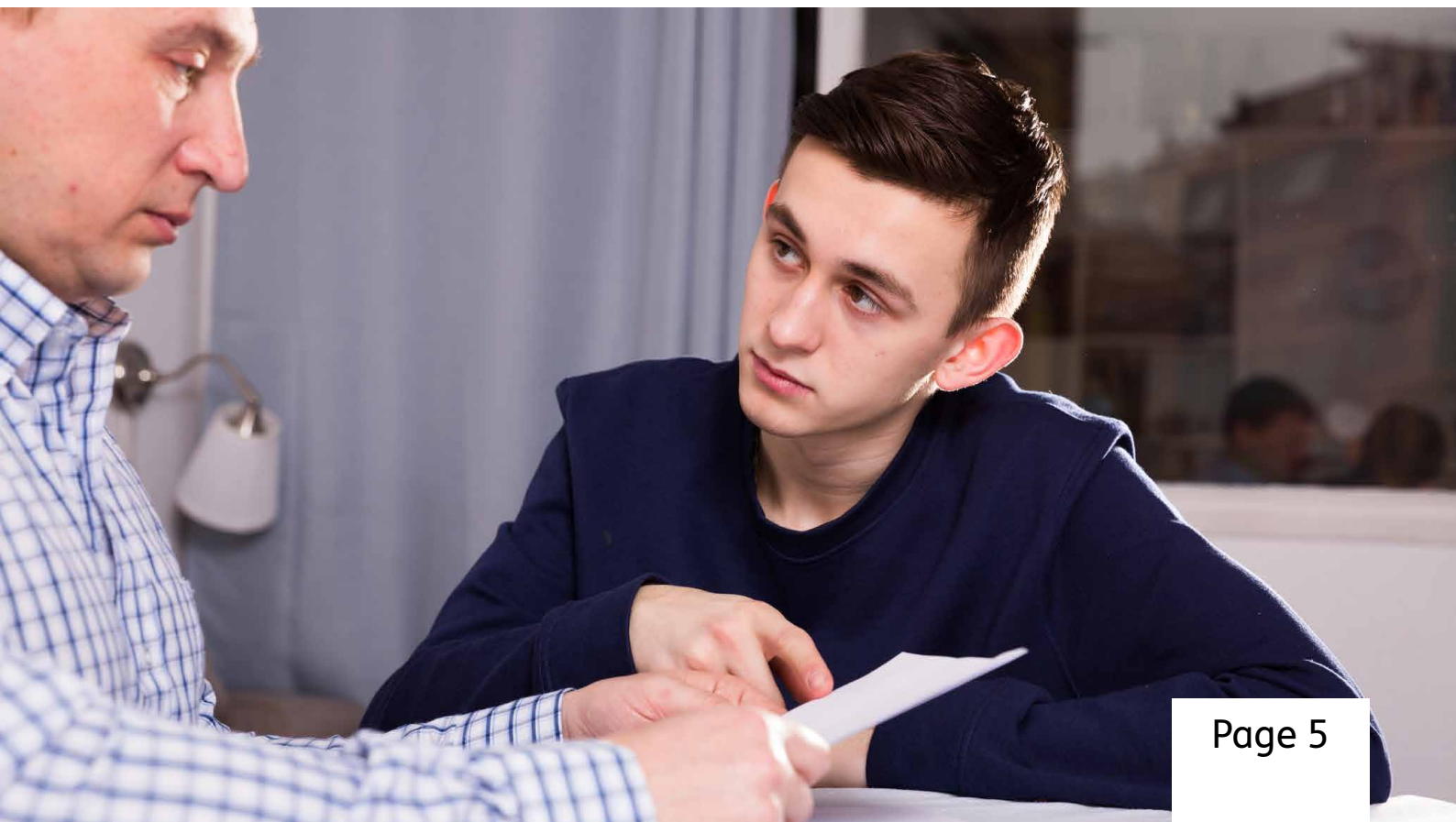
The report must show:

- How the assessment was done.
- How people were involved and what their views were.
- What housing needs were found.
- A plan of how to meet those housing needs.

The Welsh Government will accept or reject the report.

If it is rejected, the council will need to make changes to best meet people's needs.

When the report is approved it must be published on the council's website.



Why Gypsies and Traveller accommodation assessments are needed

Gypsies and Travellers are normally a small part of the population of an area.

The total number may not be known. Some people don't want to share this information in case they are treated unfairly.

Gypsy and Traveller communities have specific housing needs. It is the law and the role of the council to meet these needs.

Listening to the views of Gypsy and Traveller communities

Councils must find out what people think when looking at housing needs. This is part of the law.

They must tell Welsh Government what they have done to gain people's views.

If they have not done enough, Welsh Ministers could reject their report.

Councils must also try to get the views of children and young people.

It should be clear to people what will happen next.

Views should be gained from all groups in the area.

If a council finds that people need a mobile home pitch, they must meet this need. This is part of a law called the **Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013**.



Will the housing assessment be different from any other groups of people?

The goals are the same - to find out what different groups of people need. But the process will be different, because of things like:

- The different places Gypsy and Traveller people live.
- The types of housing they need.
- Moving between areas.
- Showpeople's needs.

Working together

Gypsy and Traveller communities need to be fully involved in all parts of the assessment.

Local councils should work **with** Gypsy and Traveller communities. An assessment is not something done **to** them.

Local councils may work with other local councils on assessments. This might be helpful when groups travel across different local council areas.



Project management

A group should be set up to help make sure the assessment is done well. This is called a steering group.

The steering group should include:

- Local Gypsy and Traveller community members.
- Local council housing and planning departments.
- Organisations who support Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- Any other relevant services.

Some Gypsy and Traveller community members may not want to be involved.

But the council must **not** assume it's because they don't need pitches.

The council must think of other ways to learn about the housing needs of this community.

Community members may want to choose who should be in the steering group.

Community members may also want to give advice about how to involve other members.

The steering group will look at:

- The area that needs to be covered.
- What are the goals.
- How to involve people.
- Feeding back to others.



The Welsh Government have made a questionnaire to be used: gov.wales/draft-guidance-undertaking-gypsy-and-traveller-accommodation-assessments-questionnaire.html

The steering group may decide to ask extra questions if needed.

Researchers

These are the people who will go out and do the assessment.

They need to have the right experience to do this and most importantly be respectful to the culture and lifestyle of community members.

The steering group will need to decide who carries out this role.

Feedback should be given to anyone who takes part. This will help people know the difference they are making.



Working with people

It is really important that people understand why they are asked to be involved.

The whole process should be explained carefully. Information should be given in an accessible way. This means, in a way that is right for that community.

People also need to be told how their information will be used.

Everyone should be updated regularly and told what will happen next.

A council could get extra information from looking at other records. For example:

- Census
- Housing records
- Health records
- Education records
- Local planning records

Everyone should be represented

The council needs to think about how they will get people's views.

They should interview at least 1 person from each household. Not just 1 person from each site.

This includes getting the views of other family members.

This ensures everyone's voice is heard.

It is really important to help people understand what this work is for. The goal is to understand their needs. Not work against them.



Checklist for involving people

Your local council should:

- ✓ Include Gypsies and Travellers on the steering group.
- ✓ Pay community members for their time on the steering group.
- ✓ Visit every Gypsy and Traveller household at least 3 times.
- ✓ Give people contact details and information about what the assessment involves.
- ✓ Speak to relevant community organisations.
- ✓ Make a waiting list for pitches and bricks-and-mortar housing.
- ✓ Look into holding events and providing information on sites.

People may not want to get involved. They may wonder what the purpose is. Or they may not trust the council.

Community events can help people understand more.

If events are held on sites, it is easier for people to get involved.

They may also want to bring family or friends who don't live on the site. This can help.

It is important for people to know that their views are important.

It is also important to make sure people are understand what will happen next.

For example, getting involved in the assessment does not mean you are guaranteed to get a pitch.

The goal is to see what is needed. But not every single need can be met. It is important to work with the community to see what is realistic.

People can ask to be added on the local housing waiting list. Either for a mobile home pitch, or bricks-and-mortar housing.

Gypsy and Traveller culture

It is really important to understand the Gypsy and Traveller way of life when doing the assessment. Staff should have had training and be respectful of their culture.

The community are the best people to ask about what is needed.

It is also really important for children and young people to have the chance to take part, if their parents agree.



Survey questions

It is best for the interviewer to fill in the questionnaire during a face-to-face interview.



The survey is split into 5 parts:

- Section A is about your current housing.
- Section B is about your household.
- Section C is asking what you want.
- Section D is about family plans and the future.
- Section E asks about what is needed in the area and wider area.

The council may add other questions too if needed.

Checking housing needs

When the interviews have happened, the council must look to see if extra pitches are needed, and how soon they are needed.



The results should show things like:

- Type of housing needed.
- The number of households living in unsuitable housing.
- What will be needed in the future.
- How many households live on land that don't have planning permission.
- Future growth of the families.

The council also need to think about things like:

- If people will want or need bricks-and-mortar housing in the future.
- What pitches may become empty in the future.
- If people need a grant to support them to stay where they are. For example, the Disabled Facilities Grant, which helps people pay for home adaptations, like handrails and ramps.

Gypsies and Travellers and places to live

Sometimes Gypsies and Travellers end up living in places that are not right for them.

People have ended up living away from their family.

Councils need to work together to find solutions.

Sites are not spread evenly across Wales.

Sometimes people may live close to a council area where their family live.

Sometimes people live in bricks-and-mortar houses but want to live on a gypsy and traveller site.

The council needs to think about things like:

1. Families waiting to move onto a local authority site.
2. People living in bricks-and-mortar housing but who need a mobile home pitch.
3. People who live on a pitch but want to move.
4. Travelling Showpeople.
5. People living on their own sites that don't have planning permission.
6. Overcrowding.

Many people live in bricks-and-mortar homes but do not want to.

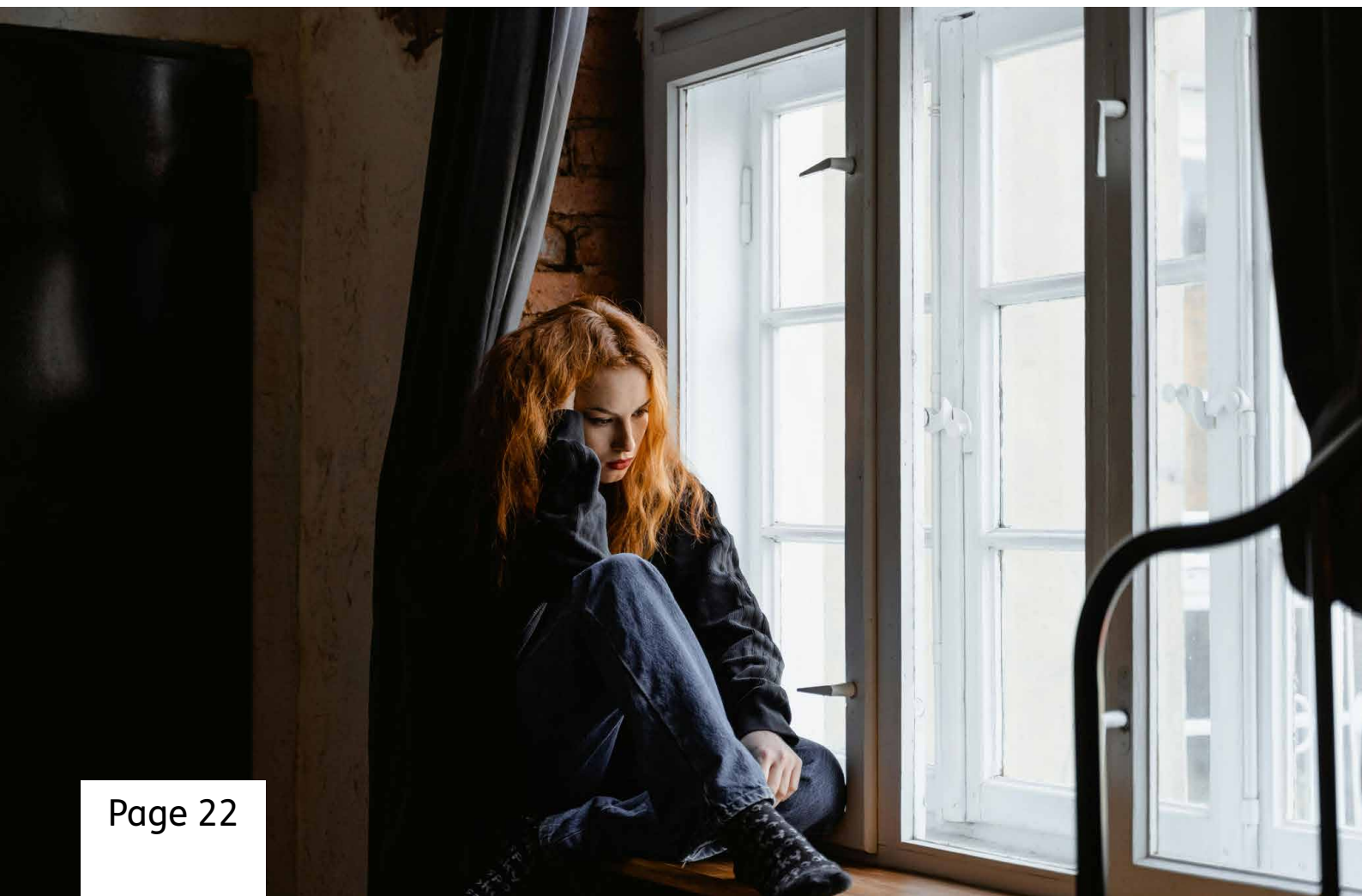
Some people may have chosen to live in brick housing for family, health or other reasons.

They may find living in this type of housing hard, and it is not right for them.

They may feel lonely and miss family and their community.

Councils must think about this and the effects it is having on people.

The quality of the site itself is also important.



Overcrowding

Overcrowding is when too many people are living on a site or in a house.

Many sites are overcrowded because there are not enough pitches or sites. This can cause health, safety and fire risks.

As a guide, there should be enough sleeping areas for:

- Each adult couple.
- Any other person over 16.
- Each pair of children under 16 of the same sex.
- Each pair of children under 10 of either sex.
- Any other child.

The council can think about adding extra mobile homes, if it is safe to do so.

Sometimes councils will find a need to have a temporary or short-term site.

This may be because of people passing through the area. Or because they are waiting to move somewhere safer.

Making plans



After the assessment, the council must write a clear plan showing:

- how people were involved
- what they found out
- and what they are going to do.

They need to think about:

- Providing local council sites.
- Supporting people to develop private sites.
- How they feed back any plans to the community.

Review and update

An assessment must be done at least once every 5 years. The council can do more assessments if there are changes or a need to.

The council need to speak to communities and share their plans with them. Communities have said that councils need to work with them closely and regularly.

If you think the council are not meeting your housing needs, you can complain. You should first complain to the council.

If you are still unhappy after complaining to the council, you can ask the **Public Services Ombudsmen for Wales** to look into your complaint:

Website: www.ombudsman.wales/contactus

Email: ask@ombudsman.wales

Phone: 0300 790 0203

Address: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
CF35 5LJ

Help and support

Organisations you can contact for help, support and advice

Gypsies and Travellers Wales

Address: Trowbridge Community Centre
Trowbridge
CF3 1RU

Phone: 029 2021 4411

Email: info@gtwales.org.uk

Travelling Ahead (Tros Gynal Plant Cymru)

Address: TGP Cymru Spark Centre
Cardiff University
Maindy Road
Cardiff
CF24 4HQ

Freephone Advice Line: 0808 802 0025

Website: tgpcymru.org.uk/what-we-do/travelling-ahead-wales-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-advice-and-advocacy-service

There and Back Again

Phone: 07931 376636

Website: thereandbackagain.wales

The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain

Address: South Wales
29 Westend Avenue
Nottage
Porthcawl
CF63 3NE

Phone: 07867 506061

Email: sgwales1@gmail.com

Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

Address: 4th Floor
One Canal Parade
Dumballs Road
Cardiff
CF10 5BF

Phone: 02920 468600

Email: enquiries@wlga.gov.uk

Website: wlga.gov.uk

Travellers' Advice Team

Community Law Partnership

National helpline for Travellers: 0121 685 8677
(Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm)

Out of hours Emergencies only: 07768 316755

Website: communitylawpartnership.co.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales

Address: 1 Caspian Point
Caspian Way
Cardiff
CF10 4DQ

Phone: 029 2044 7710

Email: wales@equalityhumanrights.com

Website: equalityhumanrights.com

The Traveller Movement

Address: 40 Jeffrey's Road
Stockwell
London
SW4 6QX

Phone: 020 7607 2002

Email: info@travellermovement.org.uk

Website: travellermovement.org.uk

Friends, Families and Travellers

Address: Community Base
113 Queens Road
Brighton
BN1 3XG

Phone: 01273 234777

Email: Fft@gypsy-traveller.org

Website: gypsy-traveller.org

Tai Pawb

Address: Trident Court
East Moors Road Cardiff
CF24 5TD

Phone: 02921 057957

Email: info@taipawb.org

Planning Aid Wales

Address: First Floor
12 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

Phone: 02920 625000

Website: planningaidwales.org.uk

Roma Support Group

Address: PO Box 23610

London

E7 0XB

Phone: 07949 089778

Email: info@romasupportgroup.org.uk

Website: romasupportgroup.org.uk

Travellers Aid Trust

Address: PO Box 16

Llangyndeyrn Kidwelly

SA17 5YT

Phone: 01554 891976

Email: info@travellersaidtrust.org

Website: travellersaidtrust.org

Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT)

Address: Little Kiln Pottery Road

Bovey Tracey

Devon

TQ13 9DS

Phone: 020 8374 1286

Email: Info@acert.org.uk

Website: acert.org.uk