



# Resource Document for Supporting Gypsy/Traveller Temporary Stopping Places in Scotland

**Last edited: April 2026**

This document provides local authorities with an overview of available information, guidance and resources relating to supporting temporary stopping places. Where there are gaps in guidance we have attempted to supplement with examples of good practice. This document is a first edition – it will be updated as more guidance and resources are found or become available. It will be uploaded on to the COSLA Migration and Population team [website](#).

This document upholds the action in the [Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers 2: Action Plan 2024-2026](#) to share best practice and provide a resource that will assist local authorities to support Gypsy/Traveller stopping places.

Please note it is not a replacement for local policy and procedures nor a substitute for the Scottish Government's Guidance for Local Authorities on [Managing Unauthorised Camping by Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland](#). It should be viewed as a resource to supplement national guidance and enhance local authority approaches to supporting temporary stopping places.

This document was prompted by [Research on Learning from the Negotiated Stopping Approach to Supporting Roadside Camps in Scotland](#). The content of the document is structured around the recommendations highlighted in the research report.

The document has been informed by the Gypsy/Traveller Negotiated Stopping (NS) Working Group and considered by the group for relevance of purpose and deliverability.

Third sector partners have provided input to clarify cultural appropriateness of the resource.

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## **1. Terminology**

The NS Working Group raised concerns about terminology and felt the terms ‘unauthorised’ and ‘managing’ could be construed as negative and discriminatory and consequently impact negative stereotyping and cohesion. Therefore, this document will use the term ‘temporary stopping place’ unless it is drawing directly from other documents and will speak to ‘supporting’ encampments in recognition of cultural right to travel and to dispel the assumption of illegality.

Furthermore, the group felt that clarity is required for the term ‘negotiated stopping’. Negotiated Stopping is a mutual and developing approach with processes that begin at the time of arrival of a temporary encampment. The approach is proactive and solution focused, with safe and appropriate land identified by local authorities in recognition of temporary stopping places being one form of culturally appropriate accommodation. Negotiation is adaptable and flexible, led by the emerging mutual needs of Gypsy/Travellers, wider settled community, and the local authority.

## **2. Accurate data to inform Gypsy/Traveller accommodation needs**

### **Points raised in Negotiated Stopping evaluation report recommendations**

Data collection was not raised in the Negotiated Stopping evaluation report.

### **Points raised by NS Working Group**

The group noted the lack of a national mechanism and the need for consistency of approach for collecting data, in relation to providing transparency and understanding the scale/volume of encampments and the associated resource impact for councils supporting encampments. Accurate data would also support the ability to set realistic expectations when considering the need to implement the national recommendations.

The NS working group emphasised the importance of informing their Housing Needs and Demands Assessment (HNDA) to assess the need for permanent / transit /seasonal sites or temporary encampment provision, to gain a better understanding of available land, and to ensure funding requirements are recognised.

### Available guidance / resources

There is no current data gathered at a national level on numbers of temporary stopping places in Scotland. Up until July 2009, Scottish Government published twice-yearly counts of ‘unauthorised encampments’ based on data returns from local authorities. In [England](#) and [Wales](#) caravan counts are carried out, including ‘unauthorised encampments’.

The most recent data exercise [Gypsy/Traveller Sites in Scotland](#) was undertaken by Scottish Government via local authority returns in 2019 and identified locations across Scotland used for Gypsy/Traveller encampments between 2017-2019.

There is currently no guidance to support local authorities with identifying Gypsy/Traveller accommodation needs and embedding them in their HNDA, Local Housing Strategies (LHS) and Development Plans. The current [Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan](#), which is due to end in March 2026, includes an action to commission research to create an Accommodation Needs Toolkit. This work will be carried forward after March 2026.

The ethnicity of Gypsy/Travellers has been included in the census since 2011, which provides wider demographic, social and economic information on Gypsy/Travellers. In the 2022 Census, 3,343 people in Scotland identified as belonging to the Gypsy/Traveller ethnic group. It has been voiced by some organisations working with communities that this is a significant underestimate and it is more likely between 15,000 and 20,000 people. The report [Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland: an analysis of Scotland's Census 2022](#) analyses the data on Gypsy/Traveller demographics and compares results across Scotland.

### Examples of good practice

East Ayrshire Council conducted a [Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment](#) as part of the evidence base to develop a new housing need and demand assessment. An in-house evaluation of the negotiated stopping pilot was also produced.

## 3. Availability of Land

### Points raised in Negotiated Stopping evaluation report recommendations

The evaluation report on the [Negotiated Stopping Approach in Scotland](#) highlights the issue of identifying safe and suitable land for temporary stopping places and transit sites as a significant challenge for Gypsy/Travellers and local authorities with no easy solution.

### **Points raised by NS Working Group**

The NS working group emphasised the extensive lack of availability of land - particularly for large groups. It was felt availability of land is perhaps the biggest challenge in supporting stopping places.

Members of the group recognised identifying temporary stopping places in advance as a proactive approach but also emphasised the limitations and risks in doing so. The group discussed the challenges for local authorities relating to Gypsy/Travellers not approaching and notifying the council for advice prior to establishing a temporary encampment, generally due to cultural complexities.

As well as acknowledging the importance of taking account of the Gypsy/Traveller community's views on culturally safe and suitable land, the NS working group emphasised the lack of guidance for local authorities to support their assessment of what is safe and suitable land.

### **Available guidance / resources**

There is currently limited information to support local authorities to find alternative safe and suitable land for temporary encampments.

According to the [Scottish Government Unauthorised Encampment Guidance](#) there are some locations where an encampment will not be acceptable under any circumstances (because of traffic hazards, environment damage, etc.).

The Scottish Government guidance recommends that local authorities, in developing their own strategies for handling sites, identify those locations in their local authority area which are unsuitable for an unauthorised site. It also suggests local authorities could identify and designate locations that can be used for unauthorised sites. These are not sites with facilities, but areas of land that the local authority has determined as being suitable for use by Gypsy/Travellers wishing to set up an unauthorised site.

There are some key points regarding choosing a suitable area for a temporary stopping place in the Scottish Government '[Interim Site Design Guide for Gypsy/Traveller Sites in Scotland provided by Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords](#)'.

The Welsh Government Guidance '[Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites](#)' has a chapter on temporary stopping places (chapter 7). It gives guidance on providing an alternative location for the re-location of inappropriate encampments and if there is

not the demand for a transit site. The guidance states temporary stopping places need to be pro-actively identified before encampments occur. It provides guidance on site location, layout and access, and site facilities.

#### **Examples of good practice**

West Lothian Council has convened an elected member cross-party working group, [Unauthorised Traveller Encampment Working Group](#), to consider unauthorised encampment within West Lothian. Work is currently being undertaken by the working group and officers to establish if the council owns any suitable land for the purposes of negotiated stopping places and to develop a framework for negotiated stopping.

#### **4. Access to facilities**

##### **Points raised in Negotiated Stopping evaluation report recommendations**

The evaluation report on the [Negotiated Stopping Approach in Scotland](#) identified barriers faced by Gypsy/Traveller communities in accessing recycling and waste management; adequate access to toilet and washing facilities; and difficulties gaining access to clean drinking water.

##### **Points raised by NS Working Group**

The NS working group recognised a clear differentiation between waste types i.e. general/household waste requiring a household permit which is allocated according to local postcode, and business/building/green waste requiring a local licence that is not transferrable across local authorities.

The NS working group considered:

- The reality of temporary encampments accumulating waste, and the impact of resource and capacity issues for local authorities;
- The cost implications between providing adequate bin provision and collection (dependant on suitable access) over complete clean ups when an encampment leaves the area; and
- A fair approach to payment/fee options for temporary encampments pro rata to that of wider settled community.

The NS working group acknowledged that travelling (for cultural reasons, work or other events) prevents the ability to provide proof of residency or business registration in the local authority area attached to the encampment.

The NS working group recognised the need for public water points to always be accessible. This was viewed as a basic need and to take a public health approach to service delivery to ensure access to safe drinking water.

### **Available guidance / resources**

There is limited information for local authorities on how to tackle and the cost implications of waste disposal at temporary stopping places.

[Scottish Government Unauthorised Encampment Guidance](#) states accumulation of rubbish and waste can be a common problem associated with unauthorised sites. The guidance states fly-tipped materials should not be present on unauthorised sites. Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) makes it illegal to keep, treat or deposit waste on land without a waste management licence to do so. Section 89 of the EPA places a duty on local authorities to keep their land and roads clear of litter and refuse.

There is no mention of access to drinking water and one mention of toilets (in reference to large events) in the [Scottish Government Unauthorised Encampment Guidance](#).

Scottish Water provides a [Top Up Tap map](#) to locate public drinking water refill points across Scotland.

Scottish Government '[Interim Site Design Guide for Gypsy/Traveller Sites in Scotland provided by Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords](#)', suggests, as a minimum, on a transit or temporary stopping site, each pitch should have:

- An electric point;
- A toilet, portable if necessary;
- Access to water for sanitation and laundry; and
- Waste disposal facilities.

### **Examples of good practice**

East Ayrshire Council has adopted an [engagement-based approach to encampments](#) which has improved dialogue and service provision to Gypsy/Traveller families – elements such as provision of water and waste uplift has reduced the amount of waste left on sites when encampments move on.

## 5. Access to Health

### Points raised in Negotiated Stopping evaluation report recommendations

The evaluation report on the [Negotiated Stopping Approach in Scotland](#) identified challenges with access to health care as a recommendation. The research highlighted negative experiences of trying to access healthcare through general practice/health centres, perceiving a lack of understanding about their communities and their needs. This can result in greater demand being placed on accident and emergency services.

### Points raised by NS Working Group

The NS working group identified lack of access to health services resulting in serious conditions being undiagnosed therefore putting the person at risk and putting pressure on the NHS.

The NS working group highlighted the benefit for all local authority areas to have access to informed health provision, for example MECOPP Community Health Workers (CHW), but current funding for the service limits the geographical spread of the service.

### Available guidance / resources

According to the [Scottish Government Unauthorised Encampment Guidance](#) as part of a local authority roles and responsibilities, they should make an initial assessment of needs and inform relevant agencies (e.g. education, health and welfare). The guidance recommends that whichever official makes the initial site visit it is important that they have the appropriate experience, training, and skills to carry out such a visit effectively. There is no further information on training in the guidance. (See 'Reducing Stigma and Discrimination' section for further information on training resources).

[MECOPP Community Health Workers](#) service in Scotland provides direct support to Gypsy/Traveller communities, including those in houses, on sites or roadside. They aim to improve physical and mental health by assisting with service access, providing advocacy for rights, and offering practical support to address inequalities. MECOPP is based in Edinburgh and provides the Community Health Worker service in 4 areas across Scotland.

[GP Health Access Card](#) has been designed to help Gypsy/Travellers, and other vulnerable groups, when registering with a new GP practice. There are two cards available. Printable versions of the card can be downloaded from the website.

### **Examples of good practice**

Fife Council has worked with [NHS Scotland Childsmile](#) with attending temporary stopping places and providing more general information on dental services and providing basic dental kits.

Fife Council has used training on 'Turas' led by NHS Fife: [Turas | My Turas | Home](#)

## **6. Reducing Stigma and Discrimination**

### **Points raised in Negotiated Stopping evaluation report recommendations**

The evaluation report on the [Negotiated Stopping Approach in Scotland](#) identified that there are fundamental issues of underlying stigma and discrimination frequently experienced by Gypsy/Traveller communities and that there needs to be greater awareness and understanding of Gypsy/Traveller cultural identity, history and traditions to support the reduction of issues and barriers.

### **Points raised by NS Working Group**

The NS working group highlighted the challenge of balancing the needs of Gypsy/Travellers and the wider settled community, as there is a level of expectation placed on local authority officers, as well as constituency pressures on elected members, which creates conflict in providing equality of service to all. This can be due to differing levels of understanding or perceptions of what constitutes anti-social behaviour (including criminality) and identifying appropriate intervention.

### **Available guidance / resources**

As noted in the [Scottish Government Unauthorised Encampment Guidance](#) Gypsy/Traveller communities have a right to a nomadic lifestyle, and a right to live free from prejudice, discrimination, and harassment protected under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equalities Act 2010. The Scottish Government guidance aims to balance the rights of Gypsy/Traveller communities with those of the settled population.

A list of training resources to support awareness raising, cultural competency, inclusive services, tackling hate crime, preventing anti-social behaviour, and promoting community cohesion:

- [MECOPP](#) provides a [suite of resources](#) about awareness raising, accommodation, health and social care, and 'same rights' videos, which are intended to support the learning of practitioners who work directly with Gypsy/Traveller communities or who have an interest in developing their knowledge and skills.
- [STEP \(Supporting Equitable Access to Education\)](#) provides cultural awareness raising [training and resources](#) and their [school pledge](#) is a framework for Scottish schools to ensure inclusive, supportive, and safe environments, addressing low attendance rates.
- [Article 12](#) has recently introduced a new project [Young Gypsy/Travellers as Human Rights Defenders](#) which will equip young Gypsy/Travellers with the skills and knowledge necessary to have their voice heard and given due weight and attention in decision making processes that impact their daily lives.
- [Progress in Dialogue](#) is a Scottish social enterprise led by Gypsy/Traveller activists. They have information on racism and hate crime, including [how to report a hate crime](#) and a list of resources relating to [Gypsy/Traveller Cultural Awareness](#).
- [Friends, Families and Travellers](#) is an English-based third sector organisation which works to end racism and discrimination against Gypsy/Traveller communities – a variety of resources can be found on their website, including ways to celebrate [Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month](#) and [inclusive services training](#) (please note there is a charge for this training).
- The [Travellers Movement](#) is a UK civil society organisation comprised of ethnic Romany (Gypsy), Roma, Irish Travellers and members of the majority population. The Traveller Movement provide [training and consultation](#) (please note that they provide a mix of free and chargeable training).
- COSLA Gypsy/Traveller Cohesion Survey Findings Report
- The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed guidance for local councillors in response to elected members expressing a wish for support in approaching and countering disinformation. [The guidance](#) sets out key definitions and tangible actions councillors can take to respond effectively.
- The LGA published a [guide to disinformation affecting local authorities](#) and their communities, which includes definitions of mis/dis/mal-information, guidance on how to respond, and case studies from councils.
- The Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) [published a briefing](#) on how local authorities can establish proactive measures to combat mis/disinformation. This briefing advises on how to develop trusted, positive counter narratives.

- COSLA and Scottish Government's [Understanding Hate Crime Toolkit](#) has been designed to support local authorities in tackling hate crime and promote community cohesion.
- The [Safer Scotland page on reporting hate crime](#) provides information on how to report hate crimes to Police Scotland, Third Party Reporting Centres, and Crimestoppers.

### **Examples of good practice**

Several Local Authorities have produced Good Neighbour Agreements (GNA) for supporting Gypsy/Traveller temporary encampments. They are voluntary, proactive, and collaborative frameworks designed to prevent anti-social behaviour and foster positive relationships between Gypsy/Travellers and the settled community. These agreements often cover behaviour, noise reduction and waste disposal.

Examples are:

- Fife Council [Good Neighbour Guide](#) and Cooperation Policy
- Scottish Borders Council 'Good Neighbour Code' [Gypsy/Travellers - rights and responsibilities | Scottish Borders Council](#)

East Ayrshire Council have developed an internal online learning module, to raise awareness and challenge negative perceptions around the Gypsy/Traveller community, which has been rolled out to all frontline housing staff.

## **7. Next steps**

This document will be updated as more guidance and resources are found or become available and will be uploaded on to our website.