

Grampian Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2017

Summary Report



Purpose of the Project

In late 2016 it was agreed by the local authority partners of the Grampian Gypsy/Traveller Interagency Group that an updated accommodation needs assessment of Gypsy/Travellers in Grampian was required. Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC) and the University of Aberdeen were commissioned to deliver the Needs Assessment. A large-scale Needs Assessment for the Grampian region had previously been published by Craigforth in 2009.

Methodology

The research work was delivered using the following methods:

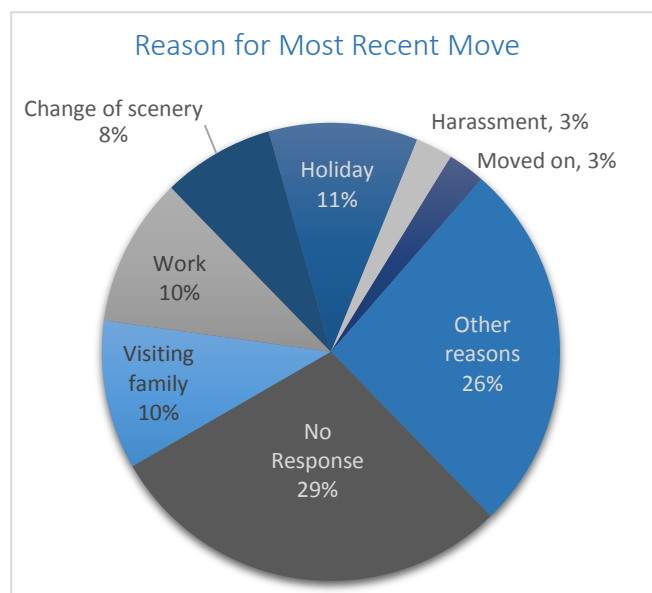
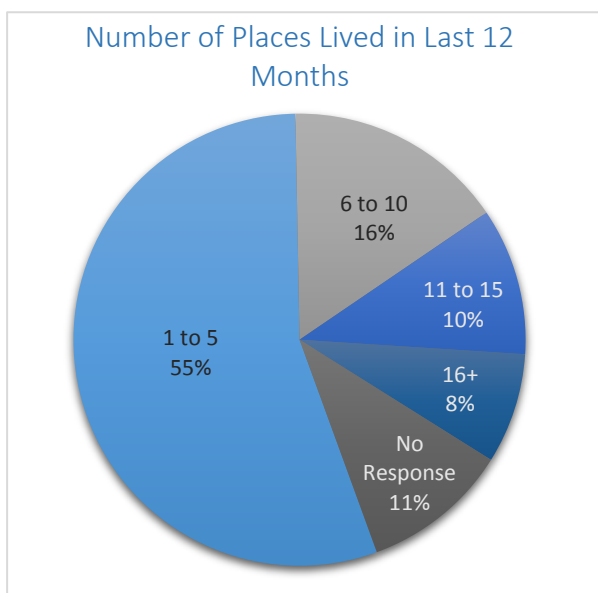
1. An analysis of the number of encampments in each local authority area since 2009;
2. A literature review with a focus on the national context and any shifts since 2009;
3. Engagement with Gypsy/Traveller communities residing in Grampian during May-Sept 2017;
4. Engagement with key stakeholders.

Progress Since 2009

Progress, in terms of meeting the needs of Gypsy/Traveller communities in the Grampian region since 2009, has been mixed. There have been a range of developments in Aberdeenshire, whereas in terms of site provision there has been little change in Aberdeen City and Moray. All areas have seen an increase in the number of encampments since 2009, with a peak in the period 2010-2013.

Key Findings

38 individuals took part in the research interviews, half of whom were located on unauthorised encampments at the time of interview, with the other half located on either a local authority or private site, or in housing. Participants had been in their current location for a varied period of time, ranging between 1 day and 29 years. Most had lived in 1-5 places during the past 12 months, with a range of factors motivating them to move between sites. There were a range of factors here, with “visiting family” and “working in the area” being the most frequent responses.

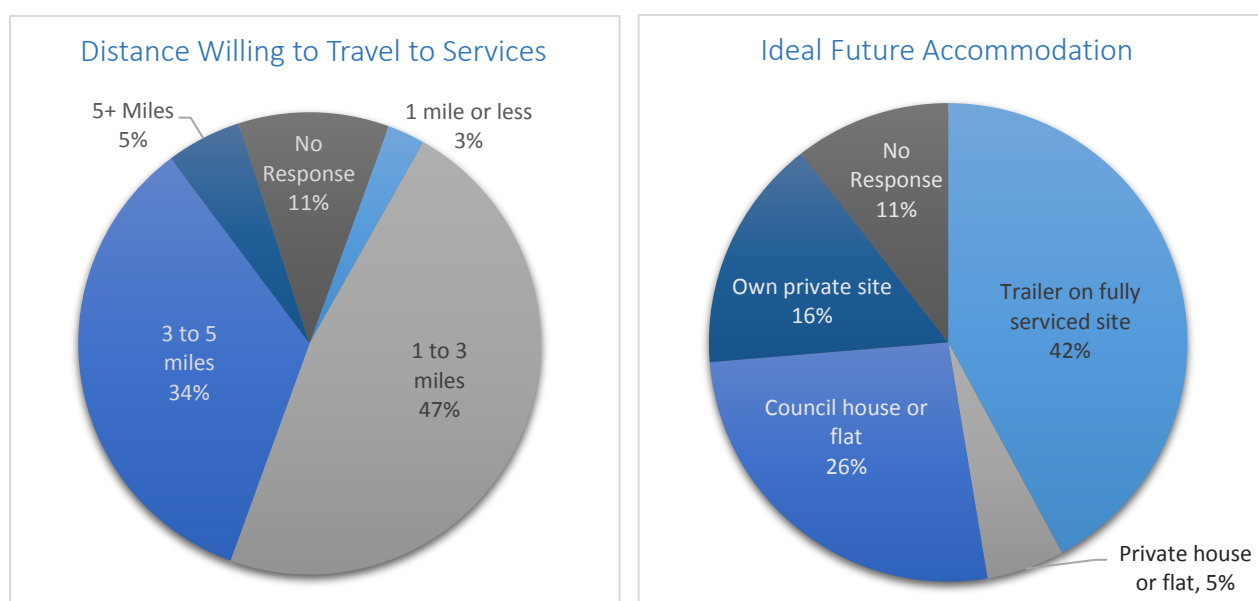


Services

In terms of services, almost all participants felt that they receive adequate support to access services. However, several participants raised issues around barriers to accessing health services. In terms of which types of services participants felt were most important to be close to, the highest priority was shops, followed by dentist, school, doctor and public transport. Most participants would be willing to travel 1-5 miles to access services.

Accommodation

21 participants felt that their current accommodation was adequate. When asked about ideal future accommodation, most favoured a pitch on a fully-serviced site, or a council flat or house. Participants suggested they would need either money, more support from the council or planning approval for more sites in order to achieve their accommodation aspirations.



Figures Shown Above

Number of Places Lived in Past 12 Months		Reason for Most Recent Move		Distance Willing to Travel to Services		Ideal Future Accommodation	
1 to 5	21	Visiting family	4	1 mile or less	1	Pitch on fully serviced site	16
6 to 10	6	Work	4	1 to 3 miles	18	Private house or flat	2
11 to 15	4	Change of scenery	3	3 to 5 miles	13	Council house or flat	10
15+	3	Holiday	4	5 miles +	2	Your own private site	6
No Response	4	Harassment	1	No Response	4	No Response	4
Total	38	Moved on	1	Total	38	Total	38
		Other reasons	10				
		No Response	11				
		Total	38				

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, in the context of local, regional and national developments, the following recommendations have been made:

1. A review of the approach of including the provision of Gypsy/Traveller sites as part of wider housing/accommodation developments (e.g. within Local Development Plans). Although this may not have been successful in the past, the mechanism seems to offer one of the best opportunities in terms of resourcing and planning. Consideration should also be given as to how new sites, and repairs to existing sites, will be funded.
2. Looking at how Gypsy & Traveller communities can realise aspirations with respect to private site development, including working in partnership with agencies such as Planning Aid Scotland. A relatively small investment in this area could lead to a significant change in outcomes for those who want to develop their own sites, and for the community more generally.
3. Working with Gypsy & Traveller communities to explore options for improving the management of encampments¹ and the potential for developing more informal stopping places, e.g. those historically used by Gypsy & Traveller communities before being closed off.
4. Agree joint protocols for data gathering around encampments and needs assessment on an on-going basis. This will allow for richer data and evidence to be developed, which in turn should support the process of site development in the future.
5. The Scottish Government's Race Equality Action Plan (and associated Framework) should be used as a means to drive forward action at a local level, as well to continue, and enhance, joint working at a regional level. The inclusion of a specific section on Gypsy/Travellers should also allow for joint working, partnership and input at a national level.
6. Initiatives to improve relations between Gypsy & Traveller communities and settled communities. It is clear from the national Scottish Attitudinal Survey and the Aberdeen Viewpoint Survey that negative opinions about Gypsy & Traveller communities remain at a significant level. For long-term positive outcomes this is an issue that will need to be addressed.

¹ For a recognised example of good practice around encampment management, see the Leeds Gate report, "Assessing the Potential of Negotiated Stopping".