

MORE PITCHES PLEASE!


Councils are currently carrying out new
Accommodation Needs Assessments.


The assessments are being done to
work out if there is a need for more


Gypsy/Traveller sites in your area and it
is really important that you take part in
the process so that your Council

identifies the true level of need for sites
in your area.



 Your council will almost certainly employ consultants to carry out the assessment and you will probably be asked to complete a questionnaire.

 **How you answer the assessment questions is really important as it will affect the number of pitches required in an area.**

 **Questions about travelling are particularly important.**

In 2015 the Government changed the planning definition of what it means to be a 'Gypsy or Traveller' and it now reads as follows:


Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.


This means that if you have completely stopped travelling, even if it is as a result of ill-health or old age or because you care for people who are too old or too ill to travel then you will be unlikely to meet the planning definition and any need you or your dependants have for a caravan site will no longer be included in the Council's assessment of its need for Gypsy/Traveller sites in your area.






So, if you are still travelling for work, even if it is only for part the year or in order to buy and sell goods at any of the traditional horse fairs etc. then it is essential you make that clear to your Council when it assesses its need for sites in your area.


 **We have already seen some examples of questionnaires** being used by consultants to assess needs and have some concerns about the way in which the questions have been worded and the limited space on forms to give answers.

 For example, on a form produced by ORS questionnaire there is a section in the questionnaire about travelling (Section F) which could cause people to give misleading answers.


For example, one question asks ‘How many trips you have made in the last 12 months’

If you answer ‘0’ to this question then you will probably not be deemed a Gypsy or Traveller according to the new planning definition, so don’t forget to include trips such as for work, looking for work, going to horse fairs etc. 

Another question asks ‘When did you stop travelling’

Please think carefully before answering such a question. Have you stopped travelling for good? If so then you could be judged not to be a Gypsy or Traveller in planning terms. 

Another question asks ‘Have you or family members ever travelled?’

If you answer ‘No’ to this question then you will be probably be judged not to be a Gypsy or Traveller in planning terms. So again don’t forget to include trips looking for work, visiting horse fairs etc. 

Finally, a question asks ‘Do family members plan to travel in the future?’

Again, please bear in mind that if you answer ‘No’ you will be judged not to be a Gypsy or Traveller in planning terms, so think carefully about whether you are ever likely to be travelling again in the future. 