

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Dear Mr Dominic Raab,

**Put Traveller Site Provision first – No More Punitive Legislation.**

In response to your announcement of a government review of the laws and powers to deal with unauthorised caravan sites and developments on Thursday 5th April 2018, we call on you to prioritise addressing the root cause of unauthorised sites in the UK - the chronic national shortage of site provision.

We are highly concerned that the introduction of tough new powers to tackle unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller sites which may be considered by ministers are disproportionate in the context of the chronic shortage of site provision in the UK. We are concerned that increased powers and therefore increased evictions will further worsen the health and wellbeing of Gypsy and Traveller communities, who are already recognised by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as one of the groups experiencing the worst health and educational inequalities in the UK.

We are greatly concerned that the review and the questions chosen to guide the consultation process will reinforce and further anti-Gypsyism sweeping across Europe and have an adverse effect on all statutorily homeless Gypsies and Travellers.

We wish to highlight that increased enforcement powers are likely to worsen issues with unauthorised sites for settled communities across the country. If families are evicted from an unauthorised site, they often have nowhere else to go and therefore will have no other option but to create a new unauthorised site in a new area. A better first step is to focus on adequate site provision in order to meet current and future need and for the government to fulfil its 'positive obligation to facilitate the Gypsy way of life' (as outlined by the European Court of Human Rights in Chapman v UK).

We the undersigned urge Ministers to support Gypsies and Travellers in the UK in addressing issues of site provision as a basis to improve the appalling health and education outcomes for many people in these communities. If Gypsy and Traveller families cannot access a site to live on, they do not have easy access to water and sanitation, which most of us take for granted in the UK in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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