# Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers
(2019-2021)

COSLA

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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(2019-2021)

The Scottish Government, Edinburgh 2019

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# Foreword

**Improving the lives of our Gypsy/Traveller communities is a significant human-rights commitment for Scottish Government and COSLA and is crucial if we are to tackle deep-rooted inequalities and deliver a fairer Scotland.**

As leaders in national and local government, we are united in our view that in a modern and inclusive Scotland there is no place for what the Scottish Government's Independent Race Equality Adviser Kaliani Lyle[1] called "the widespread exclusion, deprivation and social antipathy that Gypsy/Travellers face".

Through our work to develop this action plan, we have seen and heard evidence that Gypsy/Travellers have often missed out on improvements that the majority of people and communities across Scotland have enjoyed.

As well as seeing their traditional lifestyle eroded, our Gypsy/Traveller communities experience poorer outcomes in terms of living standards, education, health and employment, and often face extreme and persistent stereotyping and hostility as they go about their lives.

Across Scottish Government and COSLA, our 32 Local Authorities and the Scottish Parliament, there is a clear recognition of these injustices and the need for action to improve the lives of Gypsy/Travellers and for changes to be lasting.

This joint plan will start to demonstrate our firm commitment to make things right. It sets out the work we will do in partnership to deliver better outcomes for, and with, Gypsy/Traveller communities over the next two years.

The actions we will deliver have been developed with the advice, support and challenge of advocates, activists and members of the Gypsy/Traveller communities, as well as being informed by the expertise of those who are responsible for developing and delivering policies and services, nationally and locally. These strong partnerships, ongoing political leadership and crucially, the participation of Gypsy/Traveller communities themselves, will be key to its success.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the community members and activists who have helped us to develop the action plan. Many of them have worked tirelessly over many years to campaign for change, and all of them have dedicated time and energy to share their stories and their experiences, their aspirations for their families and their communities. Their input has been invaluable and we look forward to continuing to work closely together to ensure that the actions in this document deliver meaningful change in the lives of Gypsy/Travellers across Scotland.

**Christina McKelvie**
MSP, Minister for Older People and Equalities

**Councillor Elena Whitham**,
COSLA Spokesperson for Community Wellbeing

1 Kaliani Lyle was the Independent Race Equality Adviser to the Scottish Government from 2016-2018

# Summary

## About the Action Plan

**Scottish Government and Local Government are working together during 2019-2021 to improve the lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Traveller communities.**

We have spoken to many Gypsy/Travellers and listened to their concerns about accommodation, education, health and access to services. We know that the community face many disadvantages and that action needs to be taken to make sure that Gypsy/Travellers are treated fairly, have positive experiences of our public services and can access all of their rights and entitlements.

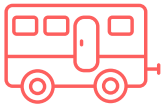
**We are working with the Gypsy/Traveller community and with organisations who deliver services, to make sure that Gypsy/Travellers:**

- have safe and culturally appropriate places to live and travel
- understand their rights and have positive experiences of accessing services
- have support to maximise incomes, increase employment opportunities, and improve the standard of living
- feel safe, respected and valued members of Scotland's diverse population
- have a seat at the table, are listened to, and have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

# Summary

## Our Commitments

To help make this happen, we will work together to:



### Provide more and better accommodation

- Ensure the needs of Gypsy/Travellers are appropriately and collectively resourced
- Understand the accommodation needs and preferences of Gypsy/Travellers to inform future provision
- Make sure the planning system works better for Gypsy/Traveller communities

### Improve access to public services

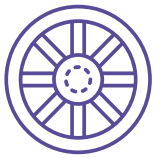
- Work with the community to raise awareness of key rights and entitlements
- Help to ensure that services are responsive to Gypsy/Travellers' specific needs and preferences
- Improve educational outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers by supporting them to take advantage of their right to education
- Test new ways to tackle health inequalities

### Better incomes in and out of work

- Help Gypsy/Travellers maximise their incomes and increase uptake of financial support they are eligible for
- Support parents to overcome barriers to work, and in-work poverty and
- Improve standard of living by reducing daily living costs for Gypsy/Travellers

### Tackle racism and discrimination

- Provide leadership to challenge racism and discrimination
- Promote Gypsy/Traveller's rights
- Recognise and value Gypsy/Traveller history and culture



### Improve Gypsy/Traveller representation

- Strengthen community development and engagement
- Make sure Gypsy/Travellers are fairly represented in decisions that are made at national and local level
- Support a national Gypsy/Traveller 'movement for change'

## The Actions

**Our action plan describes some of the key activities we will deliver during 2019-2021 to fulfil these commitments and help to make changes now and lay foundations for lasting change that will see an end to deeply-embedded inequalities.**

We will produce more detailed delivery plans which set out who will be responsible for taking each of the actions forward, how they are doing this and when they will have completed it by.

Members of the Ministerial Working Group and COSLA (the organisation that represents Local Government) will meet every six months with members of the Gypsy/Traveller community to monitor and discuss progress and find solutions to any challenges that might arise.

# Introduction

"Research evidence published in *How Fair is Scotland* and confirmed by Scottish Government's analysis of the 2011 Census shows that on every indicator of what is required to live a happy, productive and fulfilled life, Gypsy/Travellers are worse off than any other community in Scotland. The high levels of poverty experienced by Gypsy/Travellers is linked to poor health and the lack of employment and integral to all these issues is the provision of sites across the country. The Scottish Human Rights Commission in its evidence to the Equal Opportunities Committee in 2013 described the discrimination towards Gypsy/Travellers as 'the last bastion of respectable racism'.

"Despite parliamentary enquiries and reviews of progress, various reports, strategies and initiatives, little has changed for Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland. They face much the same problems that have troubled them for decades. In their *Gypsy/Travellers and Care* Report, the 2012 Equal Opportunities Committee concluded that the evidence pointed to 'repeated failures: recommendations that have not been implemented and initiatives too small scale or short term'. A point repeated in the 2013 Equal Opportunities Committee Report *Where Gypsy/Travellers Live* which calls for strong leadership at all levels and the need for a powerful Ministerial Voice."

**Report from the Scottish Government's Independent Race Equality Adviser: Addressing Race Equality in Scotland: The Way Forward (2017).**

This is the context for the creation of the Ministerial Working Group on Gypsy/Travellers, which was set up to develop innovative solutions to seemingly intractable problems, and to do so at an accelerated rate. The group was made up of Ministers with responsibility for the key areas of accommodation (housing and planning), education, health, and employment, working alongside COSLA. Our joint work over the last 18 months, and this action plan, responds to the challenge of the Independent Race Equality Adviser set out in her 2017 report.

Making Scotland fairer for our Gypsy/Traveller communities is a long-term aim, and it will take time to unpick the significant, entrenched and long-standing inequalities they face.

This plan sets out agreed actions we will take forward across local and national government in Scotland to make meaningful progress. They are driven by our shared commitment to work together to tackle the disadvantage and discrimination which impacts on the lives of Gypsy/Travellers, ensuring that their communities have their voices heard and needs met on an equal basis as other citizens.

We want to create a Scotland where Gypsy/Travellers:

- have safe and culturally appropriate places to live and travel
- understand their rights and have positive experiences of accessing services
- have support to maximise incomes, increase employment opportunities, and improve the standard of living
- feel safe, respected and valued members of Scotland's diverse population
- have a seat at the table, are listened to, and have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

The plan is closely linked to our wider shared priorities in the National Performance Framework and our ambitions to create a fairer Scotland. This means tackling poverty and inequality and, in particular, to bringing an end to child poverty. It also means ensuring that everyone has a safe and secure place to live, and ending homelessness. Above all, this plan is about protecting and promoting human rights, delivering equality and creating strong and cohesive communities.

# OUR WORK SO FAR

Over the last 18 months Scottish Government and COSLA have worked closely together and with partners across the public and third sectors, and with Gypsy/Traveller Communities to develop this action plan. During this time, we have also:

- Secured political support across all parties to work together to improve the lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers.
- Formally recognised the right to travel, and committed to finding ways to map and, where possible, reopen traditional stopping places.
- Announced a shared commitment (with Police Scotland) to work together to challenge discrimination and promote equality for Gypsy/Travellers.[2]
- Celebrated Gypsy/Roma/Traveller History Month in Scotland.
- Highlighted and commemorated the experience of Gypsy/Travellers in the Holocaust, and showing Scotland's support for Dikh he na bister ("look and don't forget" annual Roma Genocide Memorial event at Auschwitz).

Since December 2017, the Scottish Government has also:

- Increased funding to support direct work with Gypsy/Travellers, including £100,000 to set up a new "Gypsy/Traveller Women's Voices" Project and continued to support to enable young Gypsy/Travellers to speak out.
- Invested an additional £275,000 (2018-2020) to improve the delivery of education to Gypsy/Traveller Children and Young People.
- Committed to providing a further £500,000 (2020-2022) to support flexible family learning in Gypsy/Traveller communities, through the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.
- Provided over £400,000 (2019-2021) for three new projects to test innovative ways of offering health and social care services, by supporting an "asset based approach" and co-production to empower members of Gypsy/Traveller communities to deliver them.
- Committed to making an additional capital investment up to £2m between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 in public sector Gypsy/Traveller sites, designed to improve quality of life.

As well as this, the Scottish Government has also published a range of reports and guidance aimed at improving outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers, including:

- Guidance on improving educational outcomes for children and young people from travelling cultures.
- Review on compliance with minimum standards for public sector Gypsy/Traveller sites.
- Ten-point action plan setting out what we will do to make the planning system work better for Gypsy/Travellers.

2 https://www.gov.scot/publications/tackling-negative-attitudes-towards-gypsy-travellers-joint-statement/

- Revised Housing Needs and Demands Assessment guidance requiring proper engagement with Gypsy/Travellers as part of the process.
- Refreshed guidance on the preparation of Strategic Housing Investment Plans.
- Updated Local Housing Strategy guidance that reaffirms the need for local authorities to have a full understanding of Gypsy/Travellers in their area.
- Embedded stronger engagement with Gypsy/Travellers in local development planning as a statutory requirement in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.
- Published the Access to Healthcare cards, which will be distributed widely and provides information to ensure good communication between patients and GP Practice reception staff from the outset, leading to a more positive experience for everyone involved.
- Updated GP Practice registration guidance, to clarify that patients do not need proof of address or photographic ID to register with a practice.

And during this time, local government has:

- Put plans in place to meet the minimum standards on public sector sites that have not yet done so.
- From our core capital funding, committed to invest in upgrading and refurbishing a number of existing public sites. This includes significant projects in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Fife. While in South Ayrshire, the local authority has built new permanent accommodation for Gypsy/Traveller residents using money from the Affordable Housing Supply programme.
- From our core revenue funding, protected and invested in engagement work with Gypsy/Traveller communities, including maintaining Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officers in areas such as Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Dumfries and Galloway, North Ayrshire and Dundee, and introducing new dedicated posts and a stronger focus on engagement in areas such as East Ayrshire and the Scottish Borders.
- Undertaken a "fact-finding" visit to learn more about the "negotiated stopping" approach to managing roadside encampments and supported 16 local authorities to hear more about the model at national workshops.
- Developed proposals for a national negotiated stopping pilot; whilst councils have continued to take local action to better support people staying on roadside camps, this includes work in West Dunbartonshire, Moray and Highland to better understand what the community needs, and new policies introduced across East Ayrshire and Perth and Kinross to support the right to travel.

- Local authorities continue to work with our colleagues in police, NHS and wider Community Planning Partners to deliver joined-up services and have fostered regional collaborations to support Gypsy/Travellers, including through the work of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray councils' Gypsy/Traveller inter-agency group and local groups in areas such as Dumfries and Galloway. Perth and Kinross have further developed a dedicated strategy at local level.
- Provided flexible learning opportunities for Gypsy/Traveller children in areas such as South Lanarkshire, where their Gypsy/Traveller Education Group has expanded the community-based education services in place to support secondary-age children and in Moray, where mobile educational opportunities have been delivered to Gypsy/Traveller young people living roadside.
- Local authorities have also provided or participated in, anti-racism and cultural awareness and training and sessions in a number of local areas including with "Show Racism the Red Card" and through the charity MECOPP, including an engagement and awareness-raising event in Falkirk.

# OUR FOCUS (2019-2021)

Over the next two years, our collective focus will be on five areas that Gypsy/Traveller communities have identified as being important to them and where the evidence shows work is required across local and national government to deliver better outcomes for the communities. These are:

More and better accommodation

Improving access to public services

Better incomes in and out of work

Tackling racism and discrimination

Improving Gypsy/Traveller representation

# OUR APPROACH

This plan sets out the actions we will take to ensure progress in the short term and lay foundations to secure longer-term change for Gypsy/Travellers.

Close partnership working across the public sector and with Gypsy/Traveller communities, with the active support of a range of third sector agencies, will be key to the success of this plan.

While the plan will be co-ordinated at a national level by COSLA and Scottish Government, it will take all of us – as public servants and local communities – to ensure the actions are delivered in ways that best meet local needs.

# OUR ACTIONS

Provide more and better accommodation

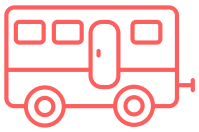
Improve access to services

Improve incomes in and out of work

Tackle Racism and Discrimination

Improve Gypsy/Traveller Representation

# Our actions provide more and better accommodation



Everybody has the right to a safe and secure home. We will work together to understand, consider and better meet the accommodation needs and aspirations of Gypsy/Travellers and support their right to travel.

Three commitments will help us make progress towards this goal. We will:

- **Ensure the needs of Gypsy/Travellers are appropriately and collectively resourced.**
- **Ensure we understand the accommodation needs and preferences of Gypsy/Travellers to inform future provision.**
- **Make sure the planning system works better for Gypsy/Traveller communities.**

**We will do this by:**

1. Making an additional capital investment up to £2m between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 in public sector Gypsy/Traveller sites, designed to improve quality of life.
2. Reviewing our housing and investment programmes to ensure the needs of Gypsy/Travellers are included and are appropriately and collectively resourced.
3. Working with Gypsy/Traveller communities so that we have a better understanding of their accommodation needs and preferences. Gypsy/Traveller accommodation will be considered as part of our approach to, and engagement on, housing to 2040. We are developing a vision for how we want our homes and communities to look and feel in 2040 and a route map to get there.
4. Taking action to ensure that all public sector sites meet the minimum standards and work with residents as part of this process.
5. Testing out positive approaches in five local areas that can strengthen the way we support families who are travelling.
6. Through the review of national planning policy we will ensure that Gypsy/Travellers have a stronger voice, at both national and local level, in guiding the future development of their places.
7. Holding a workshop with Gypsy/Travellers with lived experience of fuel poverty to understand how the Fuel Poverty Strategy and our programmes may need to be adapted to reflect the particular needs of the community.

# Improve access to public services

**Everyone should expect good quality public services. We will work together to ensure that Gypsy/Traveller communities understand their rights and are able to benefit from all of the services they are entitled to.**

**Three key commitments will help us make progress towards this goal. We will:**

- **Work with Gypsy/Traveller communities to raise awareness of rights and entitlements.**
- **Ensure that our public services are responsive to Gypsy/Travellers' needs and preferences.**
- **Test and share effective approaches to improving experiences of health and education services.**

**We will do this by:**

8. Producing clear, accessible and appropriate information on rights and entitlements and how to access them (for example on Patient Rights).

9. Providing good quality training and advice to frontline public sector staff, on how to support Gypsy/Travellers to access services fairly (for example working with NHSScotland and Health and Social Care Partnerships to address specific health and social care needs, with solutions co-produced with Gypsy/Traveller communities).

10. Recruiting and supporting Community Health Workers from Gypsy/Traveller communities, to provide health advocacy on a wide range of health and social care issues, learning from good practice in other countries.

11. Improving Gypsy/Traveller access to maternal and child health services, including, offering dedicated income maximisation services to Gypsy/Traveller mums as part of the project, building on experiences from other projects.

12. Supporting community pharmacists to use health literacy tools and techniques, developed as part of the Health Literacy Action Plan for Scotland (2017-2025) and Primary Care Transformation.

13. Working with Gypsy/Traveller communities to identify what information and support they feel they trust and need to improve their mental health and well-being, as part of the Mental Health Strategy in Scotland (2017-2027).

14. Exploring barriers to Gypsy/Traveller uptake of early learning and childcare, with a view to increasing uptake of the enhanced funded entitlement of 1140 hours from August 2020.

15. Developing partnerships with young people and their families to improve our understanding of the barriers to taking part in learning and develop strategies that will address them.

16. Working with Gypsy/Traveller families in four areas to trial new approaches to increase digital access, skills and confidence to participate in learning.

17. Providing professional learning resources and support networks for education staff across all stages of learning so that they have the knowledge and skills to support the educational needs of Gypsy/Traveller pupils and their families.

# Better incomes in and out of work

Gypsy/Traveller communities are at high risk of poverty. We will work with Gypsy/Travellers both in and out of work to maximise family incomes, address financial exclusion and improve opportunities for good quality employment.

Three key commitments will help us make progress towards this goal. We will:

- **Help to maximise incomes and increase uptake of social security.**
- **Support Gypsy/Travellers to overcome barriers to work, and in-work poverty.**
- **Take action to reduce daily living costs.**

**We will do this by:**

**18.** Developing and delivering appropriate training and guidance to ensure that Social Security Scotland provides the best possible service to Gypsy/Traveller communities.

**19.** Working in partnership with the third sector to maximise the take-up of benefits administered by Social Security Scotland amongst Gypsy/Traveller communities.

**20.** Delivering proactive and focused work to enable Gypsy/Travellers to benefit from services provided by Skills Development Scotland. This will include careers information, advice and guidance, work-based learning and employability programmes as well as promoting the opportunities offered through Scotland's Enterprising Schools.

**21.** Providing paid work experience opportunities for Gypsy/Travellers within the Scottish Government and its agencies (for example Social Security Scotland).

**22.** Offering tailored support to Gypsy/Traveller communities to encourage people to consider and apply for permanent jobs in Social Security Scotland.

**23.** Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) will offer key worker support for Gypsy/Traveller parents, as part of our wider strategy to address child poverty. This targeted support helps parents to access employment. For those already in jobs it helps to develop their skills to ensure they can sustain and progress in employment, increasing their income and lifting them and their families out of poverty.

**24.** Working with Gypsy/Traveller women and local authorities to ensure access to free sanitary products, whether in fixed locations on sites or in mobile units. This will be supplemented by training provided by the "Hey Girls" Education Officer to key staff who work with Gypsy/Traveller communities.

**25.** Working with Gypsy/Traveller communities to develop a pilot "community larder" project and promoting the Fair Food Fund amongst Gypsy/Traveller networks.

**26.** Providing initial support/training to increase digital participation on sites.

# Tackle racism and discrimination

Gypsy/Travellers experience high levels of racism and discrimination and are often stigmatised because of their identity. We will work to bring about a zero-tolerance approach to racism and unfair treatment towards Gypsy/Traveller communities.

Three key commitments will help us make progress towards this goal. Working in partnership, we will:

- **Provide leadership to challenge racism and discrimination.**
- **Promote Gypsy/Traveller's rights.**
- **Recognise and value Gypsy/Traveller history and culture.**

**We will do this by:**

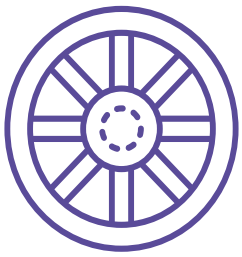
**27.** Bringing together senior leaders from across the public sector to strengthen the way services respond to discrimination towards Gypsy/Travellers including through the provision of training.

**28.** Creating a "Local Leaders" network of politicians from across Scotland to champion Gypsy/Traveller's rights and help to deliver the action plan in local communities and supporting local actions.

**29.** Working with Gypsy/Traveller communities to design a "One Scotland" marketing campaign, raising awareness of Gypsy/Travellers' positive role in Scotland's communities, and promoting strong messages to counter discrimination, hate speech and hate crime.

**30.** Supporting Gypsy/Roma/Traveller History Month (June) with financial and practical help, as a valued contribution to Scotland's cultural calendar.

# Improve Gypsy/Traveller representation



Too often, Gypsy/Travellers are not represented in our decision-making forums. We will work to make sure that Gypsy/Travellers have opportunities, encouragement and any support they might need to take a seat at the table and have a voice in decisions that affect them and their communities.

Three key commitments will help us make progress towards this goal. We will:

- **Strengthen community development and engagement.**
- **Work with Gypsy/Travellers to improve their involvement in national and local decision-making.**
- **Support a national Gypsy/Traveller "movement for change".**

**We will do this by:**

**31.** Helping to secure representation on key advisory groups and decision-making bodies on issues that are important to them (on a national and local level).

**32.** Supporting local authorities and the wider public sector to listen to Gypsy/Travellers in their areas in a meaningful and supportive way and engage them through local policy, planning and budgetary processes.

**33.** Providing practical and financial support to enable Gypsy/Traveller communities to shape national policy agendas and local priorities and to assess the progress we are making (£100,000 in 2019-2020).

# What happens after the plan is published?

**The Ministerial Working Group – which worked with COSLA to oversee the development of this plan – will continue for the lifetime of this plan.**

The Ministerial Working Group and COSLA will meet every six months to review and monitor progress and to discuss emerging opportunities, as well as find any solutions to barriers or challenges to delivery. This will involve feedback from, and discussion with, Gypsy/Traveller communities.

Delivery plans We will develop delivery plans. These will clearly identify which actions COSLA is leading on, which actions the Scottish Government are leading on, and which are shared work with other partners. They will be working documents, published online at regular intervals to demonstrate the variety of activities partners are taking under the five key areas of the plan. We will continue to work with Gypsy/Traveller communities so that they are actively involved in every stage of the work, and will ensure that their views and experiences form part of the review process.

COSLA

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