12.5.21

**New ruling puts an end to wide injunctions targeting Gypsies and Travellers**

**Additional information**

**Background**

**Why are the injunctions wrong?**

There are around 30,000 Gypsies and Travellers in London. Their culture and traditions have developed through a nomadic way of life over centuries and they are recognised as ethnic minorities under the Equality Act 2010. Yet they are constantly discriminated against and excluded.

Over many decades councils have failed to fulfil their obligation to provide sites and stopping places. Around 85 per cent of Gypsy and Traveller families in London have been forced to live in housing, or on roadside encampments due to overcrowding or lack of pitch availability.

Many Travellers who live on the road, stopping where they can, don't do so out of choice. There simply aren't any other places for them to stay.

**How bad is the shortage of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers?**

A London-wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment from 2008 identified between 700-800 pitches needed between 2007-2017. Only 10 were delivered on local authority sites during that time.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments completed since 2008 indicate there is a need for 832 new pitches in London.

However, exact statistics on the number of pitches required and available are difficult to piece together due to changes in government planning definitions. Gypsies and Travellers who stop travelling for work are not counted adequately and there is ambiguity in the methods used by local authorities in their needs assessments. A recent report from the Equality and Human Rights Commission highlights the impact of the 2015 planning definition of Travellers on local plans and provision. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/190909_gypsy_and_traveller_sites_-_impact_of_the_revised_definition_-_final.pdf>

**What are the effects of the injunctions?**

The injunctions effectively criminalise a way of life that goes back centuries, when all of us are meant to be protected by equality law. We believe they break the Equality Act because, though the camping bans apply to everyone, Gypsies and Travellers are most affected. It is not right that while councils are failing to provide sites and stopping places, they are effectively banning Travellers from whole areas.

LGT and other organisations are very concerned that the injunctions are part of a larger picture of Gypsies and Travellers’ way of life being effectively criminalised.

**What are the alternatives?**

If councils met their obligations under planning policy to ensure a sufficient supply of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, there would be no need for injunctions. As things stand, there are other approaches councils can take if Gypsies and Travellers arrive at a new location in their borough.

LGT is urging local authorities to use the negotiated stopping approach, which has been proved to reduce costs to councils and improve the lives of Traveller families. It is a more humane response that many local residents are willing to support (more information at [www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk](http://www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk)).

New Bill threatens nomadic way of life
<http://www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/news/2021/03/15/new-bill-threatens-nomadic-way-of-life/>

Injunctions under review
<http://www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/news/2020/12/16/injunctions-under-review/>

A possible end to wide injunctions?
<http://www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/news/2020/10/23/a-possible-end-to-wide-injunctions/>

Enfield withdraws injunction application
<http://www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/news/2020/10/02/enfield-council-withdraws-injunction-application/>

Injunctions criticised in landmark ruling
<http://www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/news/2020/01/21/injunctions-criticised-in-landmark-ruling/>

Ends.