

Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Needs Assessment 2026

Bolton Council

**Final Report
March 2026**

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Bolton Council 2026 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) provides the latest available evidence to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across the area.

The GTAA has included:

- A review of existing (secondary) data.
- Stakeholder consultation with a range of stakeholders, with 6 responding to a stakeholder survey including 2 face-to-face discussions.
- A household survey, review of household information and site/yard observation.

There is one site that was previously used as a Gypsy and Traveller Site at Crompton Lodge. This is no longer occupied except for three households who occasionally use their caravans on the site. Another site at Tonge Fold is not believed to be occupied. A 7-pitch site at Buckley Lane is fully occupied by an extended family of Romany Gypsies. For the GTAA, total authorised provision is assumed to be 7 pitches.

There are total of 8 Travelling Showperson yards with 85 plots. Of these, 69 are occupied by households, 12 are vacant and used for storage and 4 are vacant and available for occupancy.

Data has been carefully analysed to provide a picture of current provision across Bolton and an assessment of future need. The findings of the study provide an up-to-date, robust and defensible evidence base for policy development.

We are very grateful to the support of the Showman's Guild for their positive engagement with the work. We also acknowledge our specific appreciation for the support of the Gypsy and Traveller liaison officer in assisting with the study.

Population and current accommodation provision

The 2021 Census reported a population of **469** people who identified as 'White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller' or 'Gypsy/Romany' and 9 people identifying as 'Roma' living in Bolton. The total number of households was estimated to be **135** based on the number of Household Reference People identified in the census.

Across Bolton there is one site that was previously used as a Gypsy and Traveller Site at Crompton Lodge. This is no longer occupied except for three households who occasionally use their caravans on the site. Another site at is not believed to be occupied. The 7-pitch site at Buckley Lane is fully occupied by an extended family of Romany Gypsies.

There are total of 8 Travelling Showperson yards with 85 plots. Of these, 69 are occupied by households, 12 are vacant and used for storage and 4 are vacant and available for occupancy.

In January and July each year, councils carry out a Traveller caravan count to inform MHCLG statistics. The latest 2025 January count reports 3 caravans on Gypsy and

Traveller sites and none on Travelling Showperson yards (which is not correct as there are 69 occupied plots).

Planning policy requirements for needs assessments

The 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states in Paragraph 63 ***‘the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policy (including travellers)’***. A footnote in the NPPF then states **‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers’ housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document’**.

The 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Site (PPTS) document states that **‘local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning’** and **‘ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies’** and **‘to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply’**.

In the absence of further guidance on preparing GTAAAs, the methods adopted by arc⁴ reflect the PPTS, build upon those methods established through previous guidance, our practical experience and decisions made at planning inquiries and appeals.

Need assessment period

Need has been assessed over a short-term period 2025/26 to 2029/30 and longer-term period 2030/1 to 2042/43.

Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirements

For the period 2025/26 to 2042/43, there is a minimum need for 13 Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Bolton (Table ES1). Needs analysis considers the needs arising from existing and newly forming households on site and in bricks and mortar housing. The main drivers of need are households displaced from Crompton Lodge and bricks and mortar households

Of the overall need, 11 pitches are needed in the first five years and 2 over the longer-term period 2030/31 to 2042/43.

Notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance additional households moving out of bricks and mortar accommodation. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need and continues to set out criteria-based policies to inform future planning applications for sites should they come forward.

Table ES1 Gypsy and Traveller pitch need 2025/26 to 2042/43

Period	Pitch need
5yr Authorised Pitch Shortfall (2025/26 to 2029/30) (A)	11
Longer-term need	
Over period 2030/31 to 2034/35 (B)	2
Over period 2035/36 to 2039/40(C)	0
Over period 2040/41 to 2042/43(D)	0
Longer-term need TOTAL to 2042/43 (13 years) E=(B+C+D)	2
NET SHORTFALL 2025/26 to 2042/43 (A+E) (18years)	13
Annual net need	0.72

Meeting the need

The existing site at Crompton Lodge is closing. There is no capacity on existing sites to provide more pitches or intensify sites to create more pitches within the existing boundary of sites.

Transit provision

There is currently no existing provision to address transit need and there is limited evidence of unauthorised encampment activity. Good practice has moved away from identifying transit sites in favour of negotiated stopping. It is recommended, in line with the conclusion of the Greater Manchester 2023 GTAA, that the council considers negotiated stopping arrangements to positively manage any unauthorised encampment activity, with a recommendation to identify land to accommodate encampments of up to 5 caravans, encampments of between 6 and 10 caravans and encampments of more than 10 caravans. More information can be found at <http://www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk/>.

Travelling Showperson plot requirements

There are currently 8 Travelling Showperson yards in Bolton. There is a shortfall of 35 plots over the period 2025/26 to 2042/43 but a potential supply of 5 plots through anticipated household dissolution. This shortfall is mainly from household growth but also some households in bricks and mortar wanting to move onto plots. Additionally, there is a wider strategic need for Travelling Showperson plots across Greater Manchester. The council should maintain a criteria-based policy in the Local Plan to appraise applications that may be received.

Other caravan dweller needs

Through our engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison officer and wider stakeholders, there was no specific evidence of need from other nomadic groups such as New Age travellers or other nomadic groups in Bolton.

1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 In November 2025, arc⁴ was commissioned by Bolton Council to prepare an updated Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA). This report updates the findings of the previous GTAAs.
- 1.2 The overall scope of the study is to ensure that the council has a robust evidence base to determine an appropriate level of residential pitch and transit provision needed over the period 2025/26 to 2042/43 for Gypsies and Travellers and plots for Travelling Showpeople.
- 1.3 The 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) and section 124 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 provide the policy context for this work.

Who the study covers?

- 1.4 The 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites provides the updated definition of Gypsies and Travellers as set out within Annex 1 of the 2024 PPTS:

“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 or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.”

- 1.5 Similarly, the following definition from Annex 1 of the Guidance in respect of Travelling Showpeople is used:

‘Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.’

- 1.6 In addition:

‘For the purposes of this planning policy, “pitch” means a pitch on a “gypsy and traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “travelling showpeople” site (often called a “yard”). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for “gypsies and travellers” and mixed-use pitches for “travelling showpeople”, which may/will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment.’ (DCLG Planning policy for traveller sites December 2024 Annex 1, para 5).

- 1.7 For the purposes of this study, therefore, Gypsies and Travellers live on pitches within sites, whilst Travelling Showpeople live on plots within yards.

- 1.8 An Opinion dated 27th October 2025 by Marc Willers KC ‘On the interpretation and application of the new planning policy definition of the term ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ was prepared on behalf of Friends Families and Travellers. This concludes that:

“The DHCLG’s decision to extend the scope of the planning policy definition of ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ is a positive step which goes some way to facilitating the traditional way of life of ethnic Gypsies and Travellers. It gives individuals from ethnic minority groups ‘with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan’ (whether or not they have ever lived a nomadic habit of life or lived in caravans themselves) the opportunity to rely upon the positive planning guidance in PPTS 2024 if they seek planning permission for a caravan site. It also ensures that the needs of such people for caravan pitches are properly assessed and met by LPAs.

Finally, it should be noted that the PPTS 2024 planning policy definition does not just cater for the accommodation needs of ethnic Gypsies and Travellers. New Travellers who can demonstrate that they pursue a ‘nomadic habit of life’ including those ‘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 or permanently’ will also be captured by the definition and will be entitled to: rely upon the positive planning policy in PPTS 2024 when they seek planning permission; have their accommodation needs assessed when a LPA undertakes a new assessment of the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in its area; and have their needs met in any planned provision.”

Study geography and time frame

- 1.9 This study focuses on the needs of Travelling communities across the Bolton Council local authority area which is referred to as Bolton throughout the district. The time period is 2025/26 to 2042/43.

Report structure

- 1.10 The GTAA 2025/26 report structure is as follows:
- **Chapter 1 Introduction:** provides an overview of the study.
 - **Chapter 2 Policy and local context:** presents a review of the national policy context which guides the study.
 - **Chapter 3 Methodology:** provides details of the study’s research methodology.
 - **Chapter 4 Review of current Gypsy and Traveller population and provision of pitches/plots:** reviews estimates of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population across Bolton and existing site/yard provision.
 - **Chapter 5 Household survey:** presents relevant data obtained from the household survey research.

- **Chapter 6 Gypsy and Traveller residential pitch/transit requirements:** focuses on current and future requirements. This chapter includes a detailed assessment of drivers of demand, supply and current shortfalls across Bolton.
 - **Chapter 7 Travelling Showperson plot requirements:** focuses on current and future plot requirements. This chapter includes a detailed assessment of drivers of demand, supply and current shortfalls across Bolton.
 - **Chapter 8 Conclusion and strategic response:** concludes the report, providing brief summary of key findings and recommendations.
- 1.11 Stakeholder feedback is presented in relevant sections throughout the report.
- 1.12 The report is supplemented by the following appendices:
- **Appendix A** Household questionnaires.
 - **Appendix B** Glossary of terms.
- 1.13 We are very grateful for the support of Dorothy Clare, Bolton's Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer who has assisted in contacting households and promoting the study.

2. Policy and local context

- 2.1 This study is grounded in an understanding of the national legislative and planning policy context that underpins the assessment and provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- 2.2 This chapter sets out the policy context within which this GTAA has been prepared, including a consideration of the previous Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for Bolton.

Government policy and guidance

- 2.3 The 2024 National Planning Policy Framework states in Paragraph 63 **‘the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies’**. It then lists a number of groups including Travellers. A footnote to the paragraph **states ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out how travellers’ housing needs should be assessed for those covered by the definition in Annex 1 of that document’**.
- 2.4 The 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document states that **‘local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning’** and **‘ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies’** and **‘to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply’**.
- 2.5 Policy A of the 2024 PPTS relates to evidence needed to plan positively and manage development. This states **‘in assembling the evidence base necessary to support their planning approach, local planning authorities should:**
- **pay particular attention to early and effective community engagement with both settled and traveller communities (including discussing travellers’ accommodation needs with travellers themselves, their representative bodies and local support groups);**
 - **cooperate with travellers, their representative bodies and local support groups; other local authorities and relevant interest groups to prepare and maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely permanent and transit accommodation needs of their areas over the lifespan of their development plan, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities; and**
 - **use a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of local plans and make planning decisions’.**
- 2.6 In the absence of further guidance on preparing Traveller accommodation needs assessments, the methods adopted by arc⁴ reflect Policy A of the PPTS; build upon those methods established through previous guidance; our practical experience and findings from planning inquiries and appeals.

- 2.7 The calculation of pitch/plot requirements is based on established DCLG modelling methodology, as advocated in *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment Guidance* (DCLG, 2007). Although this guidance was formally withdrawn in December 2016, in the absence of any updated guidance on the subject, it continues to provide a good practice approach for needs modelling.
- 2.8 Policy B of the 2024 PPTS relates to planning for traveller sites and requires Local Plans:
- to be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and consistent with the policies of the NPPF; and
 - to set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for Travelling Showpeople as defined in Annex 1 which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities.
- 2.9 Policy B (paragraph 10) sets out that local authorities should, in producing their Local Plan:
- a. identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5-years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b. identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;
 - c. consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites, particularly if a local planning authority has special or strict planning constraints (local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries);
 - d. relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density; and
 - e. protect local amenity and environment.
- 2.10 Policy B (paragraph 13) sets out that local authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and therefore ensure that their policies:
- a. promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community;
 - b. promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services;
 - c. ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis;
 - d. provide a settled base that reduces both the need for long-distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment;
 - e. provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of

- any travellers who may locate there or on others as a result of new development;
- f. avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services;
- g. do not locate sites in areas at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplains, given the particular vulnerability of caravans; and
- h. reflect the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability.

Proposed revisions to the NPPF

- 2.11 Revisions to the NPPF were proposed in December 2025 and are currently out for consultation. There are some notable changes, with Traveller needs clearly embedded in Chapter 6: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes, and the provisions of the PPTS are now integrated into the NPPF.
- 2.12 Proposed policies continue to emphasise the need for evidence on permanent and transit site accommodation needs (policy HO1); setting requirement figures (policy HO2); and identifying land to supply specific deliverable sites for five years following the adoption of the local plan and a supply of specific, developable sites for subsequent years of the plan period (policy HO3).
- 2.13 Policy HO12: Traveller Sites considers development proposals for traveller sites:
 - 1. Development proposals for traveller sites should be located and designed so that they:
 - a. Provide a settled base that limits the need for long-distance travelling and potential environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment, while recognising the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability;
 - b. Enable access to education, welfare, and health services, including ensuring that children can attend school on a regular basis;
 - c. Promote opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as by providing adequate landscaping and play areas for children, and minimising adverse impacts from local environmental factors (such as noise and air quality) on the health and wellbeing of travellers that may locate there; and
 - d. Do not enclose the site such that the site and its occupants appear to be isolated from the rest of the community.
 - 2. Alongside the criteria in this policy, when considering proposals for traveller sites, local planning authorities should take into account:
 - a. The existing level of local provision and need for additional sites;
 - b. Other personal circumstances which may be relevant; and

- c. That applications for sites from any travellers should be considered and not just those with local connections.
3. Where development proposals require the permanent or temporary relocation of an authorised traveller site, an alternative site should be identified and provided. Alternative sites should take into account existing family or community groupings where possible, and involve residents occupying existing pitches, sites or plots in planning any unavoidable relocations to ensure satisfactory solutions are achieved.

Intentional unauthorised development

- 2.14 The [planning policy statement issued with PPTS 2015](#) and confirmed by [Ministerial Statement](#) makes clear that if a site is intentionally occupied without planning permission this would be a material consideration in any retrospective planning application for that site. Whilst this does not mean that retrospective applications will be automatically refused, it does mean that failure to seek permission in advance of occupation will count against the application.
- 2.15 In addition, PPTS 2024 (Paragraph 12) makes clear that in exceptional cases where a local authority is burdened by a large-scale unauthorised site that has significantly increased their need, and their area is subject to strict and special planning constraints, then there is no assumption that the local authority will be required to meet their Gypsy and Traveller site needs in full. This is intended to protect local planning authorities with significant land constraints from being required to provide for additional needs arising directly from large sites such as Dale Farm (a large unauthorised site in Essex).

Responding to challenges

- 2.16 GTAAAs are subject to intense scrutiny, particularly at planning inquiries and hearings. The methodological approaches taken by arc⁴ aim to maximise the robustness of evidence and measures include:
 - An up-to-date assessment of the number of pitches on sites and the number of households living on pitches and any vacancies.
 - Maximising response rates from households.
 - Carefully considering the relationship between households and the pitches they occupy.
 - Sensitive analysis of the flows of existing households from and to districts.
 - Consideration of overcrowding and concealed households.
 - Careful consideration of turnover on council/housing association pitches, with clear assumptions over future potential capacity from households moving away from pitches.
 - Longer-term modelling of need using detailed demographic information contained from household survey work.
 - Reasonable assumptions around the number of households in bricks and mortar accommodation who may want to move to a pitch.

Previous GTAA

- 2.17 The 2018 Greater Manchester GTAA identified a need for 10 additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 37 additional plots over the period 2017/18 to 2035/36.
- 2.18 The updated 2023 Greater Manchester GTAA focused on assessing need for Gypsies and Travellers reflected on changes to occupancy at Crompton Lodge and indicated no net additional need, but this assumed that Crompton Lodge would remain available for occupancy which is no longer the case.
- 2.19 Negotiated stopping was recommended as an approach to unauthorised encampment activity.

3. Methodology

Introduction

- 3.1 The GTAA research method is grounded in an understanding of the requirement of the NPPF and based on an established methodology which regularly withstands scrutiny at planning inquiries and hearings.
- 3.2 The methodology has comprised:
- a desktop analysis of existing documents, including data on pitches/sites and unauthorised encampments;
 - the collection of primary data, including household interviews and information gathering on Gypsies and Traveller and Travelling Showperson households;
 - stakeholder engagement with council officers, neighbouring council officers and contact with the Showman's Guild: 4 online responses were received plus engagement with the council's Gypsy and Traveller liaison officer and a face to face meeting with the Showman's Guild (Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales section) . Stakeholder feedback is presented in relevant sections throughout the report and please note that stakeholder views may not necessarily be the views of the council or arc⁴.
 - an assessment of accommodation needs taking into account all available data and information.
- 3.3 The information gathering has been carried out in three phases, as outlined below:
- Phase 1: Literature/desktop review.
 - Phase 2: Survey of Gypsies and Traveller across Bolton.
 - Phase 3: Needs assessment and production of the GTAA 2025 report.

Phase 1: Literature/desktop review and steering group discussions

- 3.4 We have reviewed relevant literature, including legislative background and best practice information; and analysis of available secondary data relating to Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Bolton. The research has been overseen by a steering group comprising local authority officers.

Phase 2: Fieldwork survey and interviews with Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and stakeholder engagement

- 3.5 Our aim is to obtain interviews from all Gypsy and Traveller households living on sites using a standard questionnaire (Appendix A1) and Travelling Showpeople (Appendix A2). This questionnaire has been carefully designed in consultation with councils, feedback from community representatives and

planning agents. We also seek to obtain household information where interviews are not practical.

- 3.6 There are three Gypsy and Traveller sites in Bolton: Crompton Lodge which is being closed but still used by three households; and two private sites of which one is occupied.
- 3.7 There are 8 Travelling Showpersons yards with 85 plots (69 occupied for residential use, 4 vacant and available for residential occupancy and 12 plots used for equipment storage and maintenance).
- 3.8 Regarding stakeholder engagement, a total of 34 individuals in organisations were contacted including Traveller Liaison and Education (5 individuals covered by 1 discussion), council officers (10), neighbouring councils (12), police (1) and national organisations including the Showman's Guild (5) and other groups(5), Stakeholders were contacted multiple times to complete a survey. A total of 6 responses were received which included some face to face discussions including a meeting with the Showman's Guild in their main office in Bury.

Phase 3: Needs assessment for Gypsy and Traveller pitches, Travelling Showperson Plots and production of report

- 3.9 A detailed explanation of the pitch/plot requirements is contained in Chapters 6 (Gypsy and Traveller) and Chapter 7 (Travelling Showperson) but briefly comprises analysis of the following:
 - current pitch/plot supply, households living in bricks and mortar accommodation; households planning to move in the next five years, and emerging households to give total need for pitches/plots; and
 - supply based on the number of authorised pitches and turnover on sites on public pitches.
- 3.10 The overall need for pitches is then compared with the overall supply.

Site and pitch size

- 3.11 There are no definitive parameters for site or pitch sizes for Gypsies and Travellers. Although now withdrawn, the DCLG Designing Gypsy and Traveller sites: good practice guide (2008) states in paragraph 4.4 that **'Gypsy and Traveller sites are designed to provide land per household which is suitable for a mobile home, touring caravan and a utility building, together with space for parking. Sites of various sizes, layouts and pitch numbers operate successfully today and work best when they take into account the size of the site and the needs and demographics of the families resident on them'**.
- 3.12 Paragraph 4.47 states that **'to ensure fire safety it is essential that every trailer, caravan or park home must be not less than 6 metres from any other trailer, caravan or park home that is occupied separately'**.
- 3.13 Paragraph 7.12 states that **'as a general guide, it is possible to specify that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity**

building, a large trailer and touring caravan (or two trailers, drying space for clothes, a lockable shed (for bicycles, wheelchair storage etc.), parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area’.

- 3.14 Paragraph 4.13 states that **‘smaller pitches must be able to accommodate at least an amenity building, a large trailer, drying space for clothes and parking for at least one vehicle’.**
- 3.15 As a general guide, it is suggested by arc⁴ that the minimum pitch size is 25m by 25m (625 square meters or 0.0625 hectares). This would support a twin-unit chalet/mobile home (15m x 6.5m), a tourer, an amenity shed/building (5m x 4m), two vehicle spaces (minimum 2.4m x 4.8m for each space) and turning circle for vehicles, amenity space and a small garden area/play space. Residential units need to be 3m from the pitch boundary and at least 6m apart. A slightly larger pitch of 25m by 30m (750 square meters or 0.075 hectares) would be appropriate for larger household units requiring several residential units. Additionally, it may be appropriate to have several caravans on a pitch to accommodate newly-forming households who may require independent accommodation but want to stay living as part of an extended family group.
- 3.16 It is generally accepted amongst the Travelling community that private sites of up to 6-10 pitches are appropriate. Public sites tend to be larger and have policies and procedures in place to ensure the effective management of sites.

Showperson yard and plot sizes

- 3.17 In 2010, the Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain prepared a document ‘Travelling Showpeople’s sites: a planning focus – model standard package). This document was intended to provide guidelines to Travelling Showpeople and Local Planning Authorities when considering the needs of Travelling Showpeople.
- 3.18 This document confirmed that:
- A plot is a piece of land occupied by a Showperson with their family and equipment, used to store fairground rides, vehicles and other items as well as for living accommodation. The family unit can be large or small, for instance an extended family with grandparents, parents and children, or a single-family unit of parents and children.
 - A yard is two or more plots owned by the same family who may use this for their own family purposes or may let part out to other Showpeople.
 - A site is a group of plots where the land is owned by individual plot holders. Quite often a Showperson’s site will have a common shared access onto the main road network.
 - Showpeople’s sites do not fit neatly into the definition of a one land use category. The sites combine a residential use with a storage use, and maintenance is also likely to be carried out on site. The residential use can take the form of static homes and caravans.
 - For a Travelling Showperson yard, the minimum size of a plot is 0.5ha and should include space for residential accommodation and equipment storage.

- 3.19 There is no formal guidance on the minimum size of a yard or a plot. Discussions with members of the Showpersons community provides some further insight into current practice on yards.
- 3.20 Within West Yorkshire, a new Showperson's 6.5 acre development comprising 7 yards has been constructed in Fitzwilliam, Wakefield district. The view of the Guild member who was involved with design of the development suggested a standard size of 150ft x 150ft per plot (0.2 hectares). For the Fitzwilliam yards, the basic plot size is 120ft x 220ft (0.25 hectares) but there are variations in the size of each plot depending on household circumstances.
- 3.21 Following further discussion with a member of the community who wants to develop new yards, it was recommended that the minimum size of a yard is 0.15ha and ideally 0.2ha. To take account of minimum spacing required under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, the minimum spacing between caravans is 6m for fire safety and 3m between the caravan and boundary. This would suggest that for a 0.15ha yard, a reasonable assumption is this could accommodate 2 caravans (or 2 plots) and a 0.2ha yard, 3 caravans (or 3 plots).
- 3.22 For any applications coming forward, the council should work flexibly to ensure that any development reflects the specific needs of families and that the number of caravans on each yard accords with legal requirements for distance between caravans.

4. Review of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population and existing provision of pitches and plots

- 4.1 This chapter looks at the current picture in terms of the current population and demography of Gypsies and Travellers across Bolton before going on to explore the extent and nature of provision across the area.

Census data

- 4.2 In October 2023, the ONS published detailed census data relating to Gypsy and Traveller populations. This provides valuable insights into the population dynamics and comparisons with overall populations although it is widely recognised that this is likely to under-report households who chose not to divulge they were from Travelling communities.
- 4.3 The 2021 Census reported a population of **469** people who identified as ‘White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ or ‘Gypsy/Romany’ and 9 people identifying as ‘Roma’ living in Bolton. The total number of households was estimated to be **135** based on the number of Household Reference People identified in the census.
- 4.4 The previous 2011 Census reported 213 people and 72 households.
- 4.5 Table 4.1 sets out a range of data relating to people identifying as Gypsies and Travellers from the 2021 Census across Bolton. In summary:
- 88% live in bricks and mortar accommodation and 12% live in a caravan/mobile structure.
 - 84% rent (76% from a social landlord and 8% privately) and 16% are owner occupiers.
 - 66.4% were overcrowded compared with 12.6% of the general population.
 - 5.6% of household were single person, 4.6% couples, 73.1% couples with children, 4.6% single parents and 12% other household types such as extended families.

Table 4.1a Characteristics of properties and households which are occupied by people identifying as Gypsy and Traveller from 2021 Census in Bolton – Dwelling type

Dwelling type	Number of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller	% of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller
Detached whole house or bungalow	330	60.6
Semi-detached whole house or bungalow	55	10.1
Terraced (including end-terrace) whole house or bungalow	55	10.1
Flat, maisonette or apartment	40	7.3
A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure	65	11.9
Total	545	100.0

Table 4.1b Characteristics of properties and households which are occupied by people identifying as Gypsy and Traveller from 2021 Census in Bolton – Tenure

Tenure	Number of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller	% of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller
Owned: Owns outright	75	13.8%
Owned: Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	10	1.8%
Private rented or lives rent free	415	76.1%
Rented Social rented	45	8.3%
Total	545	100.0%

Table 4.1c Characteristics of properties and households which are occupied by people identifying as Gypsy and Traveller from 2021 Census in Bolton – occupancy

Occupancy	Number of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller	% of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller
Occupancy rating of bedrooms 0 or more	185	33.6
Occupancy rating of bedrooms -1 or less (overcrowded)	365	66.4
Total	550	100

Table 4.1d Characteristics of properties and households which are occupied by people identifying as Gypsy and Traveller from 2021 Census in Bolton – Household Composition

Household composition	Number of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller	% of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller
One person household: Aged 66 years and over	10	1.9
One person household: Other	20	3.7
Single family household: Couple family household: No children	25	4.6
Single family household: Couple family household: Dependent children	380	70.4
Single family household: Couple family household: All children non-dependent	15	2.8
Single family household: Lone parent household	25	4.6
Other household types	65	12.0
Total	540	100.0

Table 4.1e Characteristics of properties and households which are occupied by people identifying as Gypsy and Traveller from 2021 Census in Bolton – General health

General health	Number of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller	% of people identifying as Gypsy/Traveller
Very Good	340	63.0
Good	120	22.2
Fair	60	11.1
Bad	20	3.7
Very Bad	*	0.0
Total	540	100.0
Net health score (VG+G-B-VB)		81.5

Source: 2021 Census

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/gypsy-irishtravellerpopulationsenglandandwales/census2021>

Note: * = small frequencies and not reported

- 4.6 In terms of health 85.2% of Gypsies and Travellers said their health was very good/good and 3.7% stated it was bad/very bad. The overall net health satisfaction score (% saying very good/good minus bad/very bad) was therefore 81.5% compared with 74.6% of the overall population.
- 4.7 Please note that the data reported from the census may differ from the findings of the household survey. This is because of the small population base of the Gypsy and Traveller population and data highly influenced by the level of response to both the 2021 Census and household information obtained as part

of the 2025 household survey. It is also important to note that an estimate of total households in bricks and mortar is very difficult to establish and since the census was taken the site at Crompton Lodge is no longer permanently occupied.

Caravan Count information

- 4.8 Snapshot counts of the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans were requested by the government in 1979 and have since been undertaken every January and July by local authorities. An annual count of Travelling Showperson caravans takes place every January. The counts provide a source of information on the number of caravans located on authorised and unauthorised sites but do not record the actual number of pitches on sites/yards.
- 4.9 The figures for the last seven Gypsy and Traveller caravan counts for Bolton are set out in Table 4.2. The count shows minimal numbers of caravans since Crompton Lodge is no longer permanently occupied.

Table 4.2 Bi-annual Traveller caravan count figures: January 2022 to January 2025 for Bolton

Year	Authorised sites with planning permission SOCIAL RENTED	Authorised sites with planning permission PRIVATE (TEMPORARY)	Authorised sites with planning permission PRIVATE (PERMANENT)	Unauthorised sites WITHOUT PLANNING PERMISSION	Total
Jan 2022	11	0	0	0	11
Jul 2022	12	0	0	0	12
Jan 2023	11	0	0	0	11
Jul 2023	17	0	0	0	17
Jan 2024	28	0	0	0	28
Jul 2024	0	0	0	0	0
Jan 2025	3	0	0	0	3

Source: MHCLG Traveller Caravan Count, Live Table 1

- 4.10 Over the period 2021 to 2025 the count erroneously reports no caravans on Travelling Showpersons plots (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Annual Travelling Showperson caravan count figures: January 2021 to January 2025 for Bolton

Year	Authorised sites with planning permission SOCIAL RENTED	Authorised sites with planning permission PRIVATE	Unauthorised sites WITHOUT PLANNING PERMISSION	Total
2021	0	0	0	0
2022	0	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0	0
2025	0	0	0	0

Source: MHCLG Travelling Showpeople Caravan Count, Live Table 3

Local site and yards

- 4.11 For Gypsy and Traveller residential sites, there are different types of site based on their planning status. **Authorised sites** are those with planning permission and can be on public or private land. **Unauthorised sites** are made up of either longer-term (approximately three months or longer) unauthorised encampments which can be considered to be indicative of a permanent need for accommodation (in some instances local authorities class these as tolerated sites and do not take enforcement action to remove them); and unauthorised developments, where Travellers are residing upon land that they own and that does not have planning permission (see Appendix B for more detailed definitions).
- 4.12 Table 4.4 sets out the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites across Bolton. There is one site that was previously used as a Gypsy and Traveller Site at Crompton Lodge. This is no longer occupied except for three households who occasionally use their caravans on the site. Another site at Tonge Fold is not believed to be occupied. The 7-pitch site at Buckley Lane is fully occupied by an extended family of Romany Gypsies.
- 4.13 Table 4.5 sets out the locations of Travelling Showperson yards. There are total of 8 yards with 85 plots. Of these, 69 are occupied by households, 12 are vacant and used for storage and 4 are vacant and available for occupancy.
- 4.14 The current provision of sites and yards provides a transparent base position from which the modelling of future pitch in Section 6 need can proceed.

Table 4.4 List of Gypsy & Traveller sites (as of January 2026)

Site Code	Site Name and Address	Postcode	Type of site	Number of pitches	Total pitches occupied	Total pitches vacant	Number of households on pitches	Interviews achieved	Total household information
GT1	Buckley Lane, New Bury, Bolton (Land to rear of 95 Buckley Lane),	BL4 9PQ	Private Authorised	7	7	0	7		7
GT2	Crompton Lodge, Hall Lane, Little Lever, Bolton	BL4 7QS	Local Authority Permanent Authorised	0	3	0	3	0	3*
GT3	Open Gates Caravan Park, Belvoir Street, Tonge Fold, Bolton	BL2 6AL	Private Authorised	0	0	0	0		On extension of industrial unit – assumed to be no longer part of residential supply. Previously 6 pitches on site
-	-	TOTAL	All	7	10	0	10	0	10

Source: Council data 2025, site survey and fieldwork 2025

*3 households still using the site on an occasional basis

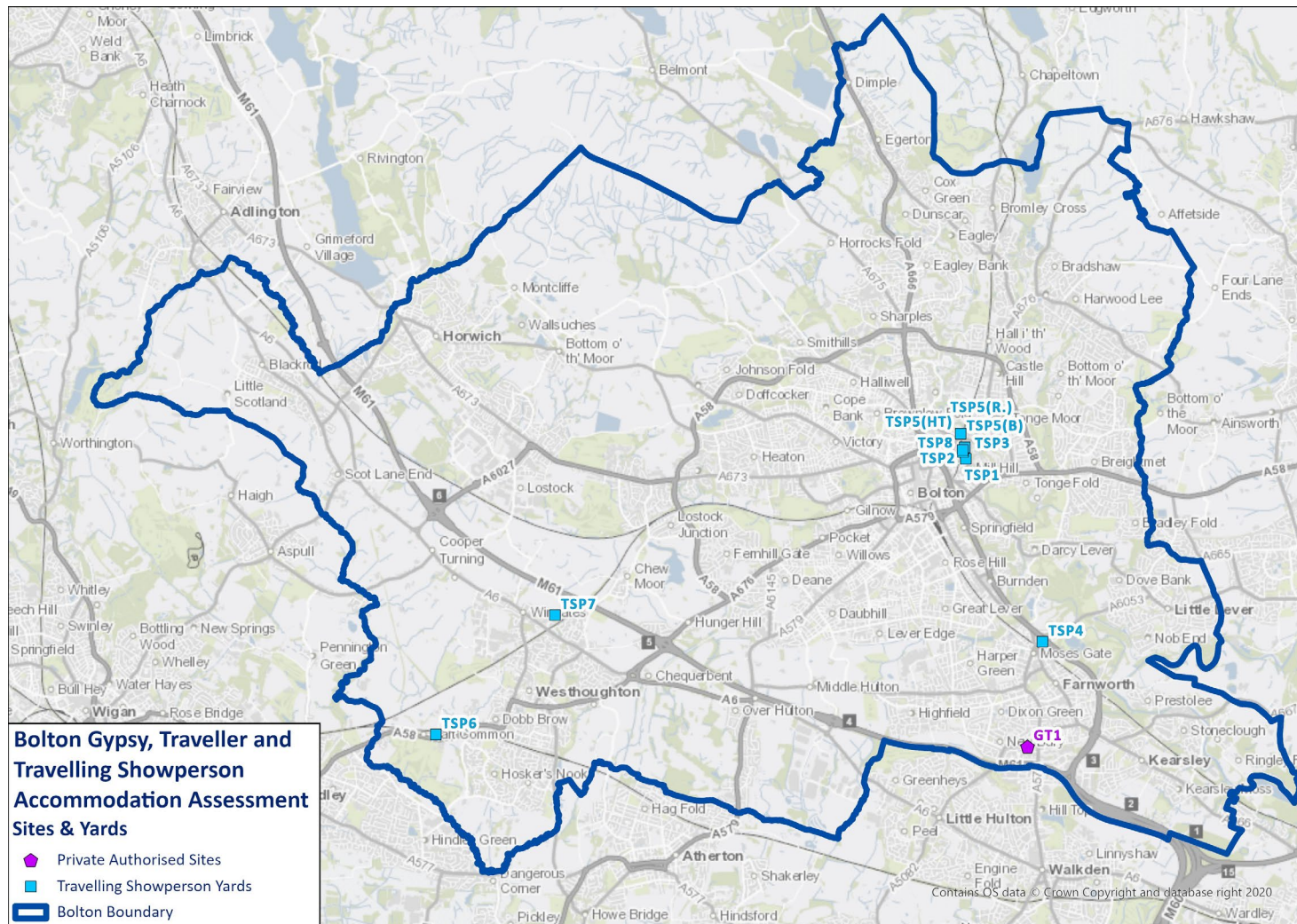
Note: for the GTAA the total authorised provision is 7 pitches

Table 4.5 List of Travelling Showperson yards (as of January 2026)

Yard Code	Yard Name and Address	Postcode	Council Area	Type of Yard	Ownership	Total No. of Plots on Yard	No. of Vacant Plots	No. of Plots used for storage	No. of Households on plots	Interviews achieved	Household information	Total household information
TSP1	Cubbins Caravan Park, Mill Hill Street	BL2 2AG	Bolton	Permanent	Local Authority (site leased from Bolton Council)	8	0	1	7		7	7
TSP2	Mill Hill Caravan Park, Windley Street, Bolton	BL2 2AA	Bolton	Permanent	Local Authority (site leased from Bolton Council)	18	0	7	11		11	11
TSP3	Lodge View Caravan Park, Windley Street, Bolton	BL2 2AH	Bolton	Permanent	Local Authority (site leased from Bolton Council)	12	0	0	12		12	12
TSP4	Fylde Street Caravan Park, Fylde Street, Bolton	BL3 2QF	Bolton	Permanent	Local Authority (site leased from Bolton Council)	6	0	0	6		6	6
TSP5(B)	Riverside Caravan Park, Longson Street, Bolton (Brinley)	BL1 2TL	Bolton	Permanent	Private	9	0	1	8	8	0	8
TSP5(HT)	Riverside Caravan Park, Longson Street, Bolton (Hill Top)	BL1 2TL	Bolton	Permanent	Private	5	1	0	4	4		4

Yard Code	Yard Name and Address	Postcode	Council Area	Type of Yard	Ownership	Total No. of Plots on Yard	No. of Vacant Plots	No. of Plots used for storage	No. of Households on plots	Interviews achieved	Household information	Total household information
TSP5(R.)	Riverside Caravan Park, Longson Street, Bolton (Riverside)	BL1 2TL	Bolton	Permanent	Private	10	3	0	7	7		7
TSP6	Old Ford Road Caravan Park (Hart Common), Old Fort Road, Westhoughton, Bolton	BL5 2BU	Bolton	Permanent	Private	12	0	3	9	6	3	9
TSP7	Tall Trees, Slack Lane, Westhoughton, Bolton	BL5 3LB	Bolton	Permanent	Private	1	0	0	1		1	1
TSP8	Hills View, Windley Street, Bolton	BL2 2AH	Bolton	Permanent	Local Authority (site leased from Bolton Council)	4	0	0	4		4	4
		TOTAL				85	4	12	69	25	44	69

Source: Council data 2025, site survey and fieldwork 2025

Map 4.1 Location of sites and yards in Bolton

Stakeholder comments on site provision

- 4.15 Stakeholders emphasised that extensive site search and engagement work has been undertaken, including reviews of council-owned land, multiple public call-for-sites exercises, and direct engagement with representative bodies. Despite these efforts, no additional suitable or deliverable sites have been identified to fully meet identified needs. Officers noted that similar challenges are being experienced across Greater Manchester, particularly where land availability is constrained and competing policy priorities apply.
- 4.16 Officers from neighbouring authorities, highlighted an ongoing and significant shortfall in the provision of permanent residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers across Greater Manchester. The 2024 Greater Manchester Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identifies a substantial need in Salford and while the borough has taken proactive steps to address this through Local Plan allocations and recent planning approvals, a residual unmet need for pitches remains.
- 4.17 Neighbouring council officers also stressed that meeting remaining needs is increasingly likely to require Green Belt release, which must be justified through exceptional circumstances under national policy. In this context, they highlighted the importance of the Duty to Cooperate and ongoing engagement with neighbouring authorities. Bolton Council was specifically identified as a key partner authority that should consider whether it has potential capacity to accommodate some of the unmet need arising elsewhere, as part of a coordinated, cross-boundary approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision across the sub-region.
- 4.18 Stakeholder responses, including from Irish Community Care Manchester, strongly reinforce the evidence of a significant and ongoing need for permanent residential pitches across Bolton. Census data indicates a notable Gypsy and Irish Traveller population in the borough, but this is widely understood to be an undercount, meaning accommodation needs are likely underestimated. The closure of Crompton Lodge has left Bolton with no authorised local authority site, further exacerbating a wider reduction in culturally appropriate provision across Greater Manchester.
- 4.19 Stakeholders emphasised that many Irish Traveller families have a clear preference for culturally specific accommodation, and the lack of available, well maintained sites has resulted in families being forced into unsuitable bricks and mortar housing, leading to loss of cultural identity and choice. In this context, and alongside acknowledged sub-regional shortfalls and constraints elsewhere, it is considered that Bolton has a critical role to play in addressing unmet need through a coordinated cross-boundary approach. Irish Community Care Manchester estimates that at least 10–15 permanent residential pitches are required in Bolton to meet current and future needs, replace lost provision, and ensure compliance with the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and the Equality Act.

Location of permanent sites, if needed

- 4.20 Irish Community Care Manchester emphasised that permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites should be located in boroughs where families have established

cultural ties, historic connections, and long-standing patterns of residence. Within Greater Manchester, this includes Bolton, Manchester, Salford and Bury, all of which have significant Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities but now have little or no authorised provision. The closure of Crompton Lodge has left Bolton without any culturally appropriate accommodation, displacing families with deep local roots into unsuitable housing or away from their support networks. Stakeholders stressed that providing a permanent site in Bolton would enable families to remain close to schools, healthcare, extended family and community support, while also highlighting the need for replacement provision in Manchester following the closure of Danzig Street and the cumulative impact of long-term under provision across the city region.

Potential barriers to provision of new permanent sites

- 4.21 Irish Community Care Manchester identified political resistance and community opposition as major barriers to the provision of new permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites, often driven by stigma, misinformation and a lack of understanding of Traveller culture. This was described as creating a cycle of under-provision, where sites are not proposed or allocated, leaving families without culturally appropriate accommodation. The stakeholder stressed that local authorities have clear statutory duties under the Equality Act and the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, which should be met regardless of public opposition.
- 4.22 Additional barriers highlighted included heightened planning scrutiny compared to other housing, policies that steer sites toward unsuitable locations, underinvestment and limited funding for new or refurbished sites, and a lack of awareness among decision makers of the importance of culturally specific accommodation, with bricks and mortar housing often incorrectly assumed to be an adequate alternative.

5. Household and stakeholder survey findings

- 5.1 This chapter presents a range of data available for households across Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson communities achieved through household surveys (presented at Appendix A), review of site management data and stakeholder engagement. Note that where there are small numbers of households, data are redacted to avoid potential identification.
- 5.2 The stakeholder views expressed in this section may not reflect the views of the council or arc⁴.

Gypsy and Traveller households

- 5.3 Management data was obtained for three households who are still associated with Crompton Lodge. Given the small number of households, there is no further analysis presented in this report, other than to say all households were Irish Traveller. Their needs have been fully taken into account in the pitch needs modelling in Chapter 6.

Help and support needs

- 5.4 The council has worked in various ways through outreach offering advice, advocacy, and providing information in alternative formats. The education team has also worked with families who have moved out of the borough to ensure continuity of education.

Travelling patterns

- 5.5 Neighbouring council officers reported limited awareness of regular movements of Gypsies and Travellers from Bolton, noting only some potential movement between Bolton and Wigan. In contrast, Irish Community Care Manchester highlighted that some Gypsy and Traveller families based in Bolton travel regularly across the North West as part of established cultural practices and family networks, with some also travelling frequently to Ireland for extended periods related to family, seasonal work or cultural events. The stakeholder noted that travel patterns vary between households and throughout the year, and while they had no direct experience of Travelling Showpeople's movements, GTAA evidence indicates that these are typically linked to work commitments and seasonal fairs rather than fixed geographic routes.

Community challenges

- 5.6 Irish Community Care Manchester noted that Gypsy and Traveller households in Bolton face significant barriers to accessing services, including low literacy levels, mistrust of statutory agencies, and experiences of stigma or feeling unwelcome. These factors make it difficult for families to navigate complex systems and seek support. The stakeholder emphasised that services need to take a proactive, culturally sensitive approach, focused on relationship-building,

trust, and engagement within familiar community settings, as reliance on standard service models can result in unmet needs.

Travelling Showperson households

- 5.7 Data for 69 Showperson households living on plots was obtained through a mixture of household surveys (25 households) and data from yard representatives (44 households). There were also 2 households living in bricks and mortar who wanted to move onto a yard. The number of responses achieved to particular questions is summarised for each question. It would not be appropriate to provide a detailed analysis of the survey information, for instance by residential location, as this has the potential to identify individual responses. Broad summaries of the household data are presented in a manner which maintains respondent confidentiality. Where analysis refers to 'small numbers' this means 4 or fewer households responding.
- 5.8 Data obtained provided an insight into household size, type and the age of residents living on plots.
- 5.9 **Household size** (base=71): 21.1% of households were single person; 33.8% two person; 9.9% three person; 29.6% four person households; 2.8% five person households and 2.8% six or more people.
- 5.10 **Household type** (base=71): 21.1% of households were single person, 33.8% couples, 35.2% couples with child(ren) including adult children, 1.4% single parents and 8.4% were multi-adult or extended families living as one household.
- 5.11 **Age profile:** The household survey and other data obtained on plot occupancy identified the age profile based on 136 Travelling Showperson households. Household data reports the following age profile: 24.3% were aged 13 or under, 6.6% aged 14-17, 15.4% aged 18-34, 19.9% aged 35-49, 13.2% aged 50-64 and 20.6% aged 65 and over.
- 5.12 **Length of residence** (base=32). Virtually all residents interviewed had lived on their yard for at least 20 years.
- 5.13 **Overcrowding:** When asked if their home was overcrowded (base=24), everyone said no. However, concerns were raised over a lack of space for equipment and the adequacy of space on yards for a combination of residential accommodation and the storage and maintenance of equipment.

Other caravan dwellers

- 5.14 The revised PPTS 2025 broadens the definition of Traveller to include 'all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or living in a caravan' and therefore widens the range of people who are covered by the PPTS. This definitional change is also included in the proposed revisions to the NPPF currently out for consultation.

5.15 The key points around the phrasing include:

‘cultural tradition’ which means a long-standing, established way of life, not necessarily a short-term or linked to economic circumstances. The wording implies habits, customs and social practices passed through time.

‘nomadism’ which means regular or seasonal movement from place to place as part of that way of life, for instance historically for work, family networks or tradition.

‘living in a caravan’ refers to people who have culturally lived in a caravan or similar mobile accommodation, not simply anyone living in a van due to housing pressure.

5.16 Essentially, the definition is seeking to ensure that local authorities do not exclude groups that do not fit neatly into a particular ethnicity, for instance New Age travellers with an established nomadic culture and other non-Gypsy Traveller groups with a demonstrable, long-term tradition of mobile living.

5.17 Although case law is currently limited as the definitional change is relatively new, in practice the phrase is unlikely to include:

- People living in vehicles solely because of lack of housing or cost;
- People without a demonstrable cultural or historic tradition of nomadism; and
- Short-term van dwellers or those adopting vehicle living later in life for economic reasons alone.

5.18 From stakeholder discussions, there were no specific needs identified from New Age travellers or van dwellers across Bolton. Van dwellers can include people choosing a mobile lifestyle, tourists, and those experiencing homelessness. The latter group often face vulnerabilities and may need comprehensive support to address complex needs. Arguably, this is more associated with the failure of the housing market to provide for a persons’ housing needs rather than a cultural need to live in a vehicle.

6. Gypsy and Traveller residential pitch and transit site requirements

Introduction

- 6.1 This section reviews the overall pitch requirements of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across Bolton. It takes into account current supply and need, as well as future need, based on modelling of data. This chapter also considers transit pitch requirements for Gypsies and Travellers. Finally, the chapter presents planning policy recommendations.
- 6.2 The calculation of pitch requirements is based on modelling as advocated in **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Guidance** (DCLG, 2007). Although now formally withdrawn, the former DCLG Guidance still provides the best-practice approach towards the assessment of pitch and plot needs (see Chapter 2 for further discussion).
- 6.3 This approach requires an assessment of the current needs of Gypsies and Travellers and a projection of future needs. It advocates the use of a survey to supplement secondary source information and derive key supply and demand information. Modelling presents an overall need based on the revised 2024 PPTS definition which is termed the ‘cultural’ need.

Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement model overview

- 6.4 Pitch need is assessed for two time periods. A short-term 5-year model looks at need over the next five years (2025/26 to 2029/30). A longer-term model looks at need over the remainder of the plan period (to 2042/43) arising from children likely to need a pitch.
- 6.5 In terms of **need**, the 5-year model considers:
- the baseline number of households on all types of site (authorised, unauthorised and temporary authorised sites) as at March 2026;
 - existing households planning to move in the next five years (currently on sites and also from bricks and mortar) and where they are planning to move to; and
 - emerging households currently on sites or in bricks and mortar accommodation and planning to emerge in the next five years and stay within the study area on a pitch; to derive a figure for total pitch need.
- 6.6 In terms of **supply**, the model considers:
- total supply of current pitches on authorised sites; and
 - vacant pitches on authorised sites.
- 6.7 The model then reconciles total need and existing authorised supply over the next five years by summarising:
- total need for pitches; and
 - total supply of authorised pitches.

- 6.8 The longer-term model then considers the cultural need over the period to 2042/43. This is based on the age profile of children under 13 living in Gypsy and Traveller households on pitches or in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Gypsy and Traveller pitch need analysis: Description of factors in the 5-year need model: Bolton

- 6.9 Table 6.1 provides a summary of the 5-year pitch need calculation for Bolton. Each component in the model is now discussed to ensure that the process is transparent and any assumptions clearly stated.

Need

Current households living on pitches (Section 1 of Table 6.1)

- 6.10 These figures are derived from council data and site observation data. The site at Compton Lodge is in the process of being closed. Most families have found alternative accommodation but there are three households still using the site occasionally.

Current households in bricks and mortar accommodation (Section 2 of Table 6.1)

- 6.11 The 2021 Census suggested there were around 119 households living in bricks and mortar accommodation living across Bolton.

Existing households planning to move in the next five years (Section 3 of Table 6.1)

- 6.12 This was derived from household information obtained from site management data.
- 6.13 Of existing households who remain associated with Compton Lodge, all will require alternative accommodation as the site is closed down and within the next 5 years. The specific flows are reported in rows 3a to 3d. The 7-pitch site at Buckley Lane is fully occupied. This is an extended family who live on the site and there is some variation in which family members live on the site at any one time. The modelling assumes that the site is adequate for the use of the extended family.
- 6.14 For households currently in bricks and mortar, based on national arc⁴ studies it is estimated that 5.3% of households living in bricks and mortar would prefer to live on a site which would equate to around **6 households**. Through stakeholder engagement, there is a suggestion there are 10 to 15 households living in bricks and mortar accommodation who would require a pitch. Discussions with the Traveller Liaison officer indicates there are few households known to the council living in bricks and mortar accommodation. As the total need from bricks and mortar cannot be confirmed, it is recommended that 6 is taken a minimum need and any future need arising from bricks and mortar households is considered through a criteria-based policy.

- 6.15 Regarding in-migration, there was no specific evidence of in-migration into Bolton in the past 5 years.
- 6.16 The factors presented in section 3 of the model result in an overall net requirement of 6 additional pitches from existing households planning to move in the next 5 years.
- 6.17 Given the complex situation in Bolton regarding Crompton Lodge, potential need from bricks and mortar and the extended family at Buckley Lane, the existing evidence identifies a minimum need. Any additional need arising, for instance from additional bricks and mortar households, is considered through a criteria-based policy.

Emerging households (Section 4 of Table 6.1)

- 6.18 This is the number of households expected to emerge in the next 5 years based on household information obtained through the GTAA (row 4). The total number is +2. All are assumed to want to live on a pitch in Bolton.
- 6.19 If young people aged 18 and over were living with family and have not specified that they want to form a new household, this is assumed to be through choice and the model does not assume they want to form a new household.

Total need for pitches (Section 5 of Table 6.1)

- 6.20 This is a total of current households on authorised pitches, households on pitches planning to move in the next five years, need from households wanting to move out of bricks and mortar onto a pitch and need from emerging households currently living on pitches. This indicates a total need for 11 pitches.

Supply

Current supply of authorised pitches (Section 6 of Table 6.1)

- 6.21 There are currently 7 authorised private pitches in Bolton.

Reconciling supply and demand

- 6.22 There is a total need over the next five years (2025/26 to 2029/30) for 18 pitches in Bolton (Table 6.1) compared with a supply of 7 authorised pitches. The result is an overall need for 11 pitches. 5 pitches are needed from households and emerging households associated with Crompton Lodge and 6 are from households moving from bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 6.23 Given the complex situation in Bolton regarding Crompton Lodge, potential need from bricks and mortar and the extended family at Buckley Lane, the existing evidence identifies a minimum need. Any additional need arising, for instance from additional bricks and mortar households, should be considered through a criteria-based policy.

Table 6.1 Summary of demand and supply factors: Gypsies and Travellers – Bolton 2025/26 to 2029/30

CULTURAL NEED			Bolton Total
1	Households living on pitches	1a. On council site	3
		1b. On private site - Authorised	7
		1c. On private site – Temporary Authorised	0
		1d. On unauthorised site	0
		1e. Total (1a to 1d)	10
2	Estimate of households living in bricks and mortar accommodation	2021 Census estimate	119
3	Existing households planning to move in next 5 years or on unauthorised site	Currently on sites	
		3a. To another pitch/same site (no net impact)	0
		3b. To another site in district (usually no net impact as need already recognised in row 1) (-)	3
		3c. From site to bricks and mortar (-)	0
		3d. To site/bricks and mortar outside district	0
		Currently in Bricks and Mortar	
		3e. Planning to move to a site in LA (+)	6
		3f. Planning to move to another B&M property (no net impact)	0
		In-migrant households	
		3g. Allowance for in-migration (+)	0
		3h. TOTAL Net impact (-3c-3d+3e+3g)	6
4	Emerging households (5 years)	4a. Currently on site and planning to live on current site and will require a pitch	0
		4b. Current on site and planning to live on another site in the district	2
		4c. Currently on site and planning to live outside the district	0
		4d. Currently in B&M planning to move to a site in LA (+)	0
		4e. Currently in B&M and moving to B&M (no net impact)	0
		4f. Currently on Site and moving to B&M (no net impact)	0
		4g. TOTAL (4a+4b+4d)	2
5	Total Need	1e+3h+4g	18
SUPPLY			
6	Current supply of authorised pitches	6a Current supply of occupied permanently authorised pitches	7
		6b. Current authorised pitches which are vacant	0
		6c. Total current authorised supply (6a+6b)	7
RECONCILING NEED AND SUPPLY			
7	Total need for pitches	5 years (from 5)	18
8	Total supply of authorised pitches	5 years (from 6c)	7
5 YEAR AUTHORISED PITCH SHORTFALL 2025/26 TO 2029/30			11

Longer-term pitch requirement modelling to 2042/43

- 6.24 Longer-term pitch need modelling has been carried out using known household structure information from the household survey of households who have stated a preference for living on a pitch. On the basis of the age of children in households, it is possible to determine the extent of 'likely emergence', which assumes that a child is likely to form a new household at the age of 18.
- 6.25 When calculating longer-term need, a reasonable assumption is that half of these children will form new households, bearing in mind culturally women tend to move away on marriage and men tend to stay in close proximity to their families on marriage. The model therefore assumes that 50% of children will form households when they reach 18 and that these households remain in the local authority area. This approach has been tested at inquiry and the assumption has been corroborated by several Travelling interviewees.
- 6.26 Household survey data provides long-term data to 2042/43.
- 6.27 Analysis indicates an overall need for 2 additional pitches over the longer-term 2030/31 to 2042/43 based on the number of children living on sites (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Future pitch requirements based on the assumption that 50% of children will require a pitch in Bolton

Time period	Number of children	Number of pitches
2030/31 to 2034/35 (5 years)	2	1
2035/36 to 2039/40 (5 years)	1	0.5
2040/41 to 2042/43 (3 years)	0	0
Total (13 years)	3	1.5 (rounded to 2)

Note: figures subject to rounding

Overall pitch need

- 6.28 Table 6.3 summarises the overall need for pitches across Bolton over the period 2025/26 to 2042/43. Need has been assessed over a short-term 2025/26 to 2029/30 and longer-term 2030/31 to 2042/43 period. The overall minimum need is for 13 residential pitches. The main drivers of need in the first five years is need from remaining households associated with Crompton Lodge and households in bricks and mortar accommodation who are likely to prefer living on a pitch. In the longer-term, the driver is anticipated household formation.

Table 6.3 Plan period Gypsy and Traveller pitch need 2025/26 to 2042/43 – Bolton

Period	Pitch need
5yr Authorised Pitch Shortfall (2025/26 to 2029/30) (A)	11
Longer-term need	
Over period 2030/31 to 2034/35 (B)	2
Over period 2035/36 to 2039/40(C)	0
Over period 2040/41 to 2042/43(D)	0
Longer-term need TOTAL to 2042/43 (13 years) E=(B+C+D)	2
NET SHORTFALL 2025/26 to 2042/43 (A+E) (18years)	13
Annual net need	0.72

Potential capacity for Gypsy and Traveller pitches on sites in Bolton

- 6.29 The existing site at Crompton Lodge is closing. There is no capacity on existing sites to provide more pitches or intensify sites to create more pitches within the existing boundary of sites.

Summary of need and capacity

- 6.30 Overall, there is a need across Bolton for at least 13 authorised residential pitches over the period 2025/26 to 2042/43. Of this need, 11 is in the short-term 2025/26 to 2029/30 and 2 is in the longer-term 2030/31 to 2042/43.
- 6.31 There is no potential supply from existing sites being intensified or expanded.

Stakeholder views on residential pitch need

- 6.32 Stakeholder responses, including from Irish Community Care Manchester, strongly reinforce the evidence of a significant and ongoing need for permanent residential pitches across Bolton. Census data indicates a notable Gypsy and Irish Traveller population in the borough, but this is widely understood to be an undercount, meaning accommodation needs are likely underestimated. The closure of Crompton Lodge has left Bolton with no authorised local authority site, further exacerbating a wider reduction in culturally appropriate provision across Greater Manchester.
- 6.33 Stakeholders emphasised that many Irish Traveller families have a clear preference for culturally specific accommodation, and the lack of available, well-maintained sites has resulted in families being forced into unsuitable bricks and mortar housing, leading to loss of cultural identity and choice. In this context, and alongside acknowledged sub-regional shortfalls and constraints elsewhere, it is considered that Bolton has a critical role to play in addressing unmet need through a coordinated cross-boundary approach. Irish Community Care Manchester estimates that at least 10–15 permanent residential pitches are required in Bolton to meet current and future needs, replace lost provision, and ensure compliance with the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and the Equality Act.

- 6.34 Officers from neighbouring authorities, highlighted an ongoing and significant shortfall in the provision of permanent residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers across Greater Manchester. The 2024 Greater Manchester Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identifies a substantial need in Salford and while the borough has taken proactive steps to address this through Local Plan allocations and recent planning approvals, a residual unmet need for pitches remains.
- 6.35 Stakeholders emphasised that extensive site search and engagement work has been undertaken, including reviews of council-owned land, multiple public call-for-sites exercises, and direct engagement with representative bodies. Despite these efforts, no additional suitable or deliverable sites have been identified to fully meet identified needs. Officers noted that similar challenges are being experienced across Greater Manchester, particularly where land availability is constrained and competing policy priorities apply.
- 6.36 Neighbouring council officers also stressed that meeting remaining needs is increasingly likely to require Green Belt release, which must be justified through exceptional circumstances under national policy. In this context, they highlighted the importance of the Duty to Cooperate and ongoing engagement with neighbouring authorities. Bolton Council was specifically identified as a key partner authority that should consider whether it has potential capacity to accommodate some of the unmet need arising elsewhere, as part of a coordinated, cross-boundary approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation provision across the sub-region.

Location of permanent sites

- 6.37 Irish Community Care Manchester emphasised that permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites should be located in boroughs where families have established cultural ties, historic connections, and long-standing patterns of residence. Within Greater Manchester, this includes Bolton, Manchester, Salford and Bury, all of which have significant Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities but now have little or no authorised provision. The closure of Crompton Lodge has left Bolton without any culturally appropriate accommodation, displacing families with deep local roots into unsuitable housing or away from their support networks. Stakeholders stressed that providing a permanent site in Bolton would enable families to remain close to schools, healthcare, extended family and community support, while also highlighting the need for replacement provision in Manchester following the closure of Danzig Street and the cumulative impact of long-term under-provision across the city region.

Potential barriers to provision of new permanent sites

- 6.38 Irish Community Care Manchester identified political resistance and community opposition as major barriers to the provision of new permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites, often driven by stigma, misinformation and a lack of understanding of Traveller culture. This was described as creating a cycle of under-provision, where sites are not proposed or allocated, leaving families without culturally appropriate accommodation. The stakeholder stressed that local authorities have clear statutory duties under the Equality Act and the

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, which should be met regardless of public opposition.

- 6.39 Additional barriers highlighted included heightened planning scrutiny compared to other housing, policies that steer sites toward unsuitable locations, underinvestment and limited funding for new or refurbished sites, and a lack of awareness among decision-makers of the importance of culturally specific accommodation, with bricks and mortar housing often incorrectly assumed to be an adequate alternative.

Transit requirements

- 6.40 There are a number of ways to deliver temporary places where Travellers can stop whilst passing through a local authority area. These include transit sites, stop over areas and negotiated stopping. A good indicator of transit need is unauthorised encampment activity. An unauthorised encampment refers to land where persons unknown reside in vehicles or tents without permission. Unauthorised encampments can occur in a variety of locations and constitute trespass.
- 6.41 The council reported no unauthorised encampments over the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 as reported in the 2024 Greater Manchester GTAA. There was no further evidence of unauthorised encampment activity reported by the council for this GTAA.

Stakeholder views on transit need across Bolton

- 6.42 Irish Community Care Manchester reported awareness of unauthorised encampments occurring in Bolton, though these have generally been addressed and moved on quickly. The stakeholder noted that negotiated stopping or managed approaches do not appear to have been used, with responses instead focused on rapid enforcement. It was suggested that this approach may limit opportunities to reduce disruption and to support more constructive engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 6.43 Irish Community Care Manchester acknowledged a need for transit provision in Bolton but stressed that the delivery of permanent, culturally appropriate sites should be prioritised. The stakeholder warned that, without sufficient permanent accommodation, transit sites risk being used instead for long-term provision. Once permanent needs are addressed, a small transit site of approximately 4–6 pitches was considered sufficient for Bolton, particularly if coordinated with neighbouring Greater Manchester authorities. Stakeholders noted that appropriately located transit provision could help reduce unauthorised encampments, support more consistent and humane management approaches, and improve relationships between travelling households and the local authority, provided sites offer safe access, basic services, and good connectivity while avoiding isolated or unsuitable locations.
- 6.44 Neighbouring authorities noted that, while the Greater Manchester GTAA supports the use of temporary stop-over places as a tool for managing unauthorised encampments, there is currently no clearly identified local need or agreed locations in Bolton, and further evidence and site assessment would be

required. In contrast, Irish Community Care Manchester emphasised that there is a need for temporary stop-over provision in Bolton, particularly following recent legislative changes that have criminalised unauthorised encampments and increased the risk of rapid enforcement. The stakeholder highlighted that managed alternatives, such as negotiated stopping or temporary stop-over places, could help avoid criminalisation and support more proportionate responses. However, it was stressed that any provision should be safe, accessible, and form part of a wider strategy that prioritises the delivery of permanent, culturally appropriate sites, to ensure temporary facilities are not used as a substitute for long-term accommodation

- 6.45 Irish Community Care Manchester indicated that barriers to delivering transit provision in Bolton largely mirror those affecting permanent sites and temporary stop-over places, including difficulties in identifying suitable land, community opposition, planning constraints, and a lack of investment or political support.

Conclusions on transit need across Bolton

- 6.46 The Greater Manchester 2024 GTAA recommended Negotiated Stopping agreement as a flexible approach to address transit need.
- 6.47 The 2024 GTAA recommended councils consider identifying areas of land that can be used for smaller encampments (up to 5 caravans), encampments of between 5 and up to 10 caravans and for larger encampments at least 10 caravans to accommodate Travellers passing through Greater Manchester.
- 6.48 Negotiated stopping involves councils making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The terms of the agreement can vary but usually include the provision of portaloos, waste disposal, water; the length of the agreement can vary but tends to be around 28 days; and users agree to comply with rules for behaviour and use of the site (see <https://www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk/> for more information)
- 6.49 The council also needs to be mindful of the 2022 Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Act (Part 4). This makes using land for stopping without permission a criminal offence rather than a civil offence. The Bill gives police increased powers to act and introduces significant penalties (fines up to £2,500, impounding vehicles and prison sentences).

Cross-boundary issues

- 6.50 Irish Community Care Manchester emphasised that cross-boundary issues are highly relevant, as Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities do not live or travel according to local authority boundaries. Families frequently move across Greater Manchester, the wider North West and, in some cases, to Ireland for work, family, cultural and seasonal reasons. As a result, unmet need in one borough can place pressure on neighbouring authorities through increased encampments or overcrowding. The stakeholder highlighted that both permanent and transit provision are most effective when planned on a coordinated, regional basis, and noted that differing enforcement approaches between authorities can create inconsistency and uncertainty for families.

- 6.51 Salford City Council confirmed that, in line with the Duty to Cooperate, the council is actively engaging with neighbouring authorities to address strategic cross-boundary issues. The council highlighted a willingness to work collaboratively to explore how unmet accommodation needs might be addressed across the wider sub-region. In this context, Salford indicated that Bolton Council should consider whether it has the potential to accommodate a proportion of Salford's unmet need. Officers emphasised their openness to continued dialogue and joint working to ensure that the needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities are met in a fair, effective and sustainable way across Greater Manchester.
- 6.52 Wigan Council consider that the Bolton Council GTAA stakeholder questionnaire contributes to the Duty to Cooperate.

Other needs

- 6.53 Through our engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison officer and wider stakeholders, there was no specific evidence of need from other nomadic groups such as New Age travellers or other nomadic groups in Bolton.

7. Travelling Showperson plot requirements

Introduction

- 7.1 There is a well-established community of Travelling Showpeople in Bolton. There are a total of 85 plots across eight Travelling Showperson yards of which 69 are occupied by households, 4 are vacant and available for occupancy and 12 plots are used for equipment storage.

Showperson plot requirement model overview

- 7.2 Plot need is assessed for two time periods. A short-term 5-year model looks at need over the next five years (2025/26 to 2029/30). A longer-term model looks at need over the remainder of the plan period (to 2042/43) arising from children likely to need a plot.
- 7.3 In terms of **need**, the 5-year model considers:
- the baseline number of households on plots on yards as at January 2026;
 - existing households planning to move in the next five years (currently on plots and also from bricks and mortar accommodation) and where they are planning to move to; and
 - emerging households currently on plots (and in bricks and mortar accommodation) and planning to emerge in the next five years and stay within the study area on a plot; to derive a figure for total plot need.
- 7.4 In terms of **supply**, the model considers:
- total supply of current plots on authorised yards; and
 - vacant plots on authorised yards which are available for residential use.
- 7.5 The model then reconciles total need and existing authorised supply over the next five years by summarising:
- total need for plots; and
 - total supply of authorised plots.
- 7.6 The longer-term model then considers the need over the period to 2042/43. This is based on the age profile of children under 13 living in Travelling Showperson households on plots.

Travelling Showperson plot need analysis: Description of factors in the 5-year need model: Bolton

- 7.7 Table 7.1 provides a summary of the 5-year plot need calculation for Bolton. Each component in the model is now discussed to ensure that the process is transparent and any assumptions clearly stated.

Table 7.1 Summary of demand and supply factors: Travelling Showpeople – Bolton 2025/26 to 2029/30

CULTURAL NEED			Bolton Total
1	Households living on plots	1a. On yards – leased from Council	40
		1b. On private yard - Authorised	29
		1c. Total (1a to 1b)	69
2	Estimate of households living in bricks and mortar accommodation	2021 Census estimate	N/A
3	Existing households planning to move in next 5 years or on unauthorised site	Currently on yards	
		3a. To another plot/same yard (no net impact)	0
		3b. To another plot in district (no net impact)	3
		3c. From plot to bricks and mortar (-)	0
		3d. To plot/bricks and mortar outside district	0
		In-migrant households	
		3e. Allowance for in-migration (+)	0
		Currently in Bricks and Mortar	
		3f. To plot from bricks and mortar (+)	2
		3g. TOTAL Net impact (-3c-3d+3e+3f)	2
4	Emerging households (5 years)	4a. Currently on plot and planning to live on current yard	0
		4b. Current on plot and planning to live on another yard in the district	16
		4c. Currently on plot and planning to live outside the district	0
		4d. Currently in B&M planning to move to a plot in LA (+)	1
		4e. Currently in B&M and moving to B&M (no net impact)	0
		4f. Currently on yard and moving to B&M (no net impact)	0
		4g. TOTAL (4a+4b+4d)	17
5	Total Need	1c+3g+4g	88
SUPPLY			
6	Current supply of authorised pitches	6a Current supply of occupied permanently authorised plots	69
		6b. Current authorised plots which are vacant (and not being used for equipment storage)	4
		6c. Total current authorised supply (6a+6b)	73
RECONCILING NEED AND SUPPLY			
7	Total need for plots	5 years (from 5)	88
8	Total supply of authorised plots	5 years (from 6c)	73
5 YEAR AUTHORISED PITCH SHORTFALL 2025/26 TO 2029/30			15

Need

Current households living on plots (1a to 1c)

- 7.8 These figures are derived from council data, site observation data and discussions with the Showman's Guild. In summary there are 69 households living on plots across 8 authorised yards.

Weighting

- 7.9 As information from all households living on plots has been obtained there is no need to weight the data.

Existing households planning to move in the next five years (3)

- 7.10 This was derived from information from the 2025/26 household survey for respondents currently on plots.
- 7.11 Of existing households currently on sites, the household survey indicates that three households plan to move to another yard in the next 5 years because they need larger plots.
- 7.12 Regarding in-migration, there is no evidence of households moving into Bolton in the past 5 years.
- 7.13 There are two households living in bricks and mortar accommodation who want to move onto a plot to be with other family members.
- 7.14 The factors presented in section 3 of the model result in an overall net requirement of +2 plots from existing households planning to move in the next 5 years.
- 7.15 Note that although 3 households want to move to larger plots, there would be no net change in the number of households living on plots because their former plots would become available for use for other households.

Emerging households (4)

- 7.16 This is the number of households expected to emerge in the next 5 years based on 2025/6 household survey information. The total number is +17 (16 from people on plots and 1 from bricks and mortar). If young people aged 18 and over were living with family and have not specified that they want to form a new household, this is assumed to be through choice and the model does not assume they want to form a new household.

Total need for plots (5)

- 7.17 This is a total of current households on authorised plots, households on plots planning to move in the next five years and demand from emerging households currently living on plots. This indicates a total need for 88 plots.

Supply

Current supply of authorised pitches (6)

- 7.18 Modelling assumes a total supply of 73 residential plots located across eight yards in Bolton. This comprises 69 plots which are occupied and 4 that are vacant and available for occupancy.

Reconciling supply and demand

- 7.19 There is a total need over the next five years (2025/26 to 2029/30) for 88 plots in Bolton compared with a supply 73 plots. The result is an overall need for 15 additional plots.

Longer-term plot requirement modelling to 2042/43

- 7.20 Longer-term plot need modelling has been carried out using known household structure information from the household survey of households living on plots. On the basis of the age of children in households, it is possible to determine the extent of 'likely emergence', which assumes that a child is likely to form a new household at the age of 18.
- 7.21 When calculating longer-term need, the model therefore reasonably assumes that 50% of children will form households when they reach 18 and that these households remain in Bolton. Over this period, there is a need for an additional 20 plots (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2 Future plot requirements based on the assumption that 50% of children will require a plot in Bolton

Time period	No. children	No. plots
2030/31 to 2034/35 (5 years)	9	5
2035/36 to 2039/40 (5 years)	10	5
2040/41 to 2042/43 (3 years)	21	10
Total (2030/31 to 2042/43) (13 years)	40	20

Note: figures subject to rounding

Overall plot need

- 7.22 Table 7.3 summarises the overall need for plots across Bolton over the period 2025/26 to 2042/43. Need has been assessed over a short-term 2025/26 to 2029/30 and longer-term 2030/31 to 2042/43 period. The overall need is 35 additional plots. The main driver of need in the first five years is need from households living emerging households currently living on existing plots.

Table 7.3 Plan period Travelling Showperson plot need 2025/26 to 2042/43 – Bolton

Period	Additional plots need
5yr Authorised Plot Shortfall (2025/26 to 2029/30) (A)	15
Longer-term need	
Over period 2030/31 to 2034/35 (B) (5 years)	5
Over period 2035/36 to 2039/40(C) (5 years)	5
Over period 2040/41 to 2042/43(D) (3 years)	10
Longer-term need TOTAL to 2042/43 (13 years) E=(B+C+D)	20
NET SHORTFALL 2025/26 to 2042/43 (A+E) (18 years)	35
Annual net shortfall	1.9

Potential capacity for Travelling Showperson plots on yards

- 7.23 There are currently 4 vacant plots on existing yards which are available for residential use and included in modelling. There is no capacity for the expansion of any yards. There are 12 additional plots but these are used for equipment storage.
- 7.24 Over the plan period there may be some household dissolution of 5 households which would create a small amount of residential capacity. This would reduce the overall shortfall to 30 plots.

Stakeholder views on Travelling Showperson accommodation need

- 7.25 Representatives from the Showman's Guild (Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales section) were interviewed in person as part of the GTAA. Although the specific focus on discussion was need arising from Bolton, there were wider strategic matters raised.
- 7.26 The main issues for Bolton yards are the residential overcrowding of plots and a lack of space for storing equipment which means vehicles and equipment are parked on the street. There is also a concern regarding the road maintenance around Mill and Windley Streets. Specifically, the junction road markings are worn away making driving in the area very hazardous.
- 7.27 Regarding new provision, Guild members are happy to live anywhere as long as there is good vehicular access and yards do not have to be located in town/city centre locations.
- 7.28 Neighbouring council officers highlighted a significant and ongoing unmet need for permanent residential plots for Travelling Showpeople across Greater Manchester, with implications for Bolton. While the 2024 Greater Manchester GTAA does not quantify new need for Travelling Showpeople plots, it confirms that the findings of the 2018 GTAA remain robust for plan-making purposes. The 2018 assessment identified a requirement for 68 additional Travelling Showpeople plots in Salford up to 2036, alongside the need to relocate a further 43 existing plots from the Greater Manchester Showmen's Guild site in Salford due to flood risk and planned regeneration.

- 7.29 Officers emphasised that extensive site search and engagement work has been undertaken to address this need, including reviews of all council-owned land, multiple public call-for-sites exercises, and direct engagement with the Showmen's Guild. Despite these efforts, proposed site allocations in the Draft Salford Local Plan were not supported by landowners and are not expected to be delivered. As a result, neighbouring authorities reported continued difficulties in identifying suitable and deliverable sites within Salford, reinforcing the importance of cross-boundary discussions. Officers therefore indicated that Bolton should consider, through Duty to Cooperate processes, whether there is potential capacity to help accommodate some of this unmet need as part of a coordinated Greater Manchester-wide response.
- 7.30 Irish Community Care Manchester supported the view that, given the wider pattern of limited and undeliverable provision for Travelling Showpeople across Greater Manchester, there is likely to be a need for additional permanent residential plots in Bolton. Stakeholders emphasised that Bolton should consider its potential contribution to meeting unmet needs elsewhere through a coordinated, cross-boundary approach.

Location of permanent yards

- 7.31 Irish Community Care Manchester noted that Travelling Showpeople have distinct accommodation requirements, including the need for sufficient space for equipment, vehicles and work-related storage. While not commenting on specific local preferences, the stakeholder highlighted that, in line with the principles set out in the 2024 Greater Manchester GTAA, permanent yards should be located within local authority areas where Showpeople have established connections, access to employment opportunities, and good proximity to transport routes.

Barriers to the provision of new permanent yards

- 7.32 Irish Community Care Manchester identified a range of barriers to delivering new permanent yards in Bolton, many of which reflect those affecting Gypsy and Traveller sites. These include the limited identification and safeguarding of suitable land within Local Plans, with the larger space requirements of Showpeople's yards further constraining availability. Strong community opposition was highlighted as a deterrent to councils progressing proposals, alongside underinvestment that has left existing yards at capacity and without scope for family growth. Stakeholders also noted a lack of funding for new provision and limited understanding among decision-makers of the distinct cultural and operational needs of Travelling Showpeople, leading to inappropriate site assumptions or the incorrect view that general Traveller sites can substitute for dedicated Showpeople's yards.

8. Conclusion and response

- 8.1 This concluding chapter provides a brief summary of key findings and recommendations.

Gypsy and Traveller Current accommodation

- 8.2 There are well-established Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson communities living in Bolton. The majority of Gypsies and Travellers live in bricks and mortar households.

Future Gypsy and Traveller residential need

- 8.3 There is an overall minimum need for 13 Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Bolton over the period 2025/26 to 2042/43. This need is based on households associated with Crompton Lodge and in bricks and mortar accommodation. Of this need, 11 pitches are needed in the first five years 2025/26 to 2029/30 and 2 over the period 2030/31 to 2042/43. Needs analysis considers the needs arising from existing households and newly-forming households. The overall annual need shortfall is 0.72 pitches.
- 8.4 Notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance households moving into Bolton. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need and continues to set out criteria-based policies to inform future planning applications for sites should they come forward.

Transit provision

- 8.5 There is currently no existing provision to address transit need and there is limited evidence of unauthorised encampment activity. Good practice has moved away from identifying transit sites in favour of negotiated stopping. It is recommended, in line with the conclusion of the Greater Manchester 2023 GTAA, that the council considers negotiated stopping arrangements to positively manage any unauthorised encampment activity, with a recommendation to identify land to accommodate encampments of up to 5 caravans, encampments of between 6 and 10 caravans and encampments of more than 10 caravans. More information can be found at [the Negotiated Stopping website](#).

Travelling Showperson need

- 8.6 There are currently 8 Travelling Showperson yards in Bolton. There is a shortfall of 35 plots over the period 2025/26 to 2042/43 but a potential supply of 5 plots through anticipated household dissolution. Additionally, there is a wider strategic need for Travelling Showperson plots across Greater Manchester. The council should maintain a criteria-based policy in the Local Plan to appraise applications that may be received.

Key strategic messages from stakeholders

- 8.7 Stakeholders emphasised that the Bolton GTAA should set out a clear, transparent and evidence-led strategic position on how the borough will contribute to meeting Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs both locally and across Greater Manchester. Neighbouring authorities highlighted the importance of recognising the scale and persistence of unmet need elsewhere in the sub-region, the practical delivery constraints that have limited progress, and the likelihood that difficult policy choices, potentially including Green Belt release, may be required. They stressed the need for Bolton to engage constructively through Duty to Cooperate processes as part of a coordinated Greater Manchester-wide approach.
- 8.8 Irish Community Care Manchester reinforced these messages by emphasising the need for the GTAA to clearly acknowledge Bolton's long-standing unmet need for culturally appropriate permanent site provision and to prioritise this above other forms of accommodation. They highlighted that permanent provision is essential to ensure transit and temporary stop-over sites function as intended, and that community opposition should not override statutory duties under equality legislation. They also stressed the importance of proactive, culturally sensitive engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities and a coordinated cross-boundary approach that reflects regional travel patterns and shared pressures between authorities.
- 8.9 It is Important to improve knowledge and skills for officers to support GRT groups across the borough – and upskilling through training is recommended.
- 8.10 Links with GRT communities and wider strategies should be considered including health, equalities, the Public Sector Equality Duty, climate change and visitor economy (with specific links with Travelling Showpeople).

Policy recommendations

- 8.11 It is recommended that the Local Plan continues to set out policies to inform future planning applications for private Gypsy and Traveller sites and Travelling Showperson yards.

Future updating

- 8.12 The GTAA should be updated on a 5-yearly basis to ensure that the level of pitch and plot provision remains appropriate for the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson populations across Bolton.

Appendix A1: Gypsy and Traveller Fieldwork Questionnaire

Date and Time	
Site Reference	
Address	
General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and Data Protection	GDPR came into effect from 25th May 2018. This provides rights of people to control personal data held about them by organisations. This study is being done for Bolton Council to identify if there is a need for more residential pitches and transit provision in the area. A report will be prepared based on the findings of these surveys. The information you provide will not be used for any other purpose.
Can you please say if you are happy to carry on with the questionnaire on this basis?	Yes No

1	Pitch/Property Type (and tenure if B&M)	
2	No. statics/mobiles/chalets or bricks and mortar	
3	No. tourers/caravans	
3A	No. of amenity blocks	
4	Description of pitch occupancy	
5	No. households	
6	No. concealed households	
7	No. doubled up households	
8	Does anyone else use this pitch as their home? If so, who	

9	HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS			
		Gender	Age	Relationship to respondent
	Respondent			
	Person2			
	Person 3			
	Person 4			
	Person 5			
	Person 6			
	Person 7			
	Person 8			

10	ETHNICITY	
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11	How many bedspaces are there on your pitch?	
12	Overcrowding of home	Y / N
13	Overcrowding of pitch	Y / N
14	Thinking back to when you were 15, were you living on a site, on the roadside or living in bricks and mortar housing?	S, R, B&M
15	Where were you living? Record district/settlement name	

	TRAVELLING QUESTIONS	
16	In the last year have you or someone in your household travelled?	Y / N
17	If yes, reason(s) for travelling	
18	If yes, please describe when and where do you travel? (if relevant)	
19	If no, what reasons do you or your household have for not travelling now or in the future?	

	WHERE YOU PLAN TO LIVE IN THE FUTURE	
20	Are you planning to move to another place to live in the next 5 years?	Y / N
21	Why are you planning to move?	
22	Where are you planning to move to? (Same Site, Private Site in District, Council Site in District, Outside District (if so where), Bricks and Mortar housing)	
23	What type of dwelling? (caravan, trailer, chalet, house, flat, bungalow)	
24	If pitch, single (one static) or double pitch (for two statics)	
24A	Do you need any grazing land for any livestock?	Y / N
24B	If you are considering bricks and mortar, what are your reasons	

	IF IN B&M HOUSING	
25	If you live in bricks and mortar housing, are you happy to live here or would you prefer to live on a pitch?	Happy Here / Prefer pitch
26	If you would prefer to live on a pitch is this because you have a 'cultural aversion' to living in bricks and mortar (this means if affects your mental health and makes you unhappy/ depressed)?	Y / N

	EMERGING HOUSEHOLDS	
27	Emerging households: Are there any people in your household who want to move to their own pitch in the next 5 yrs?	Y / N

		HH1	HH2	HH3	HH4
28	Where are you planning to move to? (Same Site, Private Site in District, Council Site in District, Outside District (if so where), Bricks and Mortar housing)				
29	What type of dwelling? (caravan, trailer, chalet, house, flat, bungalow)				
30	If pitch, single (one static) or double pitch (for two statics)				
31	If living in bricks and mortar, do you have a 'cultural aversion' to living in bricks and mortar? (this means if affects your mental health and makes you unhappy/ depressed)	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N

	ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL PITCHES	
32	Scope to expand site (extend the boundary of the site)	Y / N
33	No. additional pitches	
34	Scope to intensify pitches (put more pitches on the existing site)	Y / N
35	No. additional pitches	
36	Are there any vacant pitches on the site which could be used by another family? If so, how many pitches	
37	In general, is there a need for more residential pitches (for people to live on all the time?)	Y / N
38	If so, now many are needed?	
39	Who should own them (Council, people from the Traveller Community, non-Travellers)	
40	Do you own any land or know of anywhere within the district which could be considered for development as a site?	

	TRANSIT AND TEMPORARY STOPOVER NEED	
41	Is there a need to provide places where people can stop whilst travelling through the district? This can include transit pitches or stopover places	Y / N
42	Is there a need for transit pitches (for people stopping over temporarily) in the district? A transit pitch is intended for short-term use and usually includes space for two caravans, parking space and access to electricity, a toilet, washing facilities	Y / N
43	If so, how many are needed?	
44	Who should manage them? (Council, Traveller Community)	
45	Where should they be located?	

46	Is there a need for stopover places? A stopover place is land which can be used on a temporary basis and usually include access to portaloos, waste disposal and water	Y / N
47	If so, how many are needed?	
48	Who should manage them? (Council, Traveller Community)	
49	Where should they be located?	

	RESIDENTIAL HISTORY	
50	How many years have you lived here?	
Routing	If more than five years	Go to Q56
	If five years or less	Go to Q51
51	Where did you move from? (District)	
52	Were you living on a Private Site, Council Site, Roadside or Bricks and Mortar housing?	
53	When you moved here, was the pitch vacant, a brand-new pitch or had the pitch been created by dividing up an existing pitch?	
54	What were the reasons for moving here?	
55	Did you already have a connection with the area? (e.g. family or friends living here; or you used to live here?)	

	SUPPORT NEEDS	
56	Do you or a member of your household have any health-related needs? Could you please explain what they are?	

	FINAL QUESTIONS	
57	Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your housing or support needs?	
58	Do you know anyone in bricks and mortar housing looking to live on a pitch? If so, can you provide contact details	

OTHER COMMENTS

Appendix A2: Travelling Showperson Fieldwork Questionnaire

Date and Time	
Site Reference	
Address	
General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and Data Protection	GDPR came into effect from 25th May 2018. This provides rights of people to control personal data held about them by organisations. This study is being done for Bolton Council to identify if there is a need for more residential plots in the area. A report will be prepared based on the findings of these surveys. The information you provide will not be used to identify you personally, will be kept strictly confidential but the data may be shared with the council.
Can you please say if you are happy to carry on with the questionnaire on this basis?	Yes No

1	Plot /Property Type (and tenure if B&M)	
2	No. statics/mobiles/chalets or bricks and mortar	
3	No. tourers/caravans	
4	Description of plot occupancy	
5	No. households	
6	No. concealed households	
7	No. doubled up households	
8	Does anyone else use this plot as their home? If so, who	

9	HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS			
		Gender	Age	Relationship to respondent
	Respondent			
	Person2			
	Person 3			
	Person 4			
	Person 5			
	Person 6			
	Person 7			
	Person 8			

10	ETHNICITY	
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11	How many bedspaces are there on your plot?	
12	Overcrowding of home	Y / N
13	Overcrowding of plot	Y / N
14	NOT USED	S, R, B&M
15	NOT USED	

	TRAVELLING QUESTIONS	
16	In the last year have you or someone in your household travelled?	Y / N
17	If yes, reason(s) for travelling	
18	If yes, please describe when and where do you travel? (if relevant)	
19	If no, what reasons do you or your household have for not travelling now or in the future?	

	WHERE YOU PLAN TO LIVE IN THE FUTURE	
20	Are you planning to move to another place to live in the next 5 years?	Y / N
21	Why are you planning to move?	
22	Where are you planning to move to? (Same Yard , Private Yard in District, Council Yard in District, Outside District (if so where), Bricks and Mortar housing)	
23	What type of dwelling? (caravan, trailer, chalet, house, flat, bungalow)	
24	NOT USED	
24A	NOT USED	Y / N
24B	NOT USED	

	IF IN B&M HOUSING	
25	NOT USED	Happy Here / Prefer pitch
26	NOT USED	Y / N

	EMERGING HOUSEHOLDS	
27	Emerging households: Are there any people in your household who want to move to their own pitch in the next 5 yrs?	Y / N

		HH1	HH2	HH3	HH4
28	Where are you planning to move to? (Same Yard , Private Yard in District, Council Yard in District, Outside District (if so where), Bricks and Mortar housing				
29	What type of dwelling? (caravan, trailer, chalet, house, flat, bungalow)				
30	NOT USED				
31	NOT USED	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N

	ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL PLOTS	
32	Scope to expand yard (extend the boundary of the yard)	Y / N
33	No. additional plots	
34	Scope to intensify plots (put more plots on the existing yard)	Y / N
35	No. additional plots	
36	Are there any vacant plots on the yard which could be used by another family? If so, how many plots	
37	In general, is there a need for more authorised plots (for people to live on all the time?) in this district	Y / N
38	If so, now many are needed?	
39	Who should own them (Council, Showpeople, non-Showpeople)	
40	Do you own any land or know of anywhere within the district which could be considered for development as a yard?	

	TRANSIT AND TEMPORARY STOPOVER NEED	
41	NOT USED	Y / N
42	NOT USED	Y / N
43	NOT USED	
44	NOT USED	
45	NOT USED	
46	NOT USED	Y / N
47	NOT USED	
48	NOT USED	
49	NOT USED	

	RESIDENTIAL HISTORY	
50	How many years have you lived here?	
Routing	If more than five years	Go to Q56
	If five years or less	Go to Q51
51	Where did you move from? (District)	

52	Were you living on a Private yard, Council yard, Roadside or Bricks and Mortar housing?	
53	When you moved here, was the plot vacant, a brand-new plot or had the pitch been created by dividing up an existing plot?	
54	What were the reasons for moving here?	
55	Did you already have a connection with the area? (e.g. family or friends living here; or you used to live here?)	

	SUPPORT NEEDS	
56	Do you or a member of your household have any health-related needs? Could you please explain what they are?	

	FINAL QUESTIONS	
57	Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your housing or support needs?	
58	Do you know anyone in bricks and mortar housing looking to live on a plot? If so, can you provide contact details	

OTHER COMMENTS	

Appendix B: Glossary of terms

Bargee Travellers: Itinerant boat dwellers on Britain's inland and coastal waterways. This includes anyone whose home is a boat and who does not have a permanent mooring for their boat with planning permission for residential use

Caravans: Mobile living vehicles used by Gypsies and Travellers; also referred to as trailers.

CJ&POA: Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994; includes powers for local authorities and police to act against unauthorised encampments.

CRE: Commission for Racial Equality.

Duty to cooperate: introduced in the Localism Act 2011 and is set out in section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It placed a legal duty on local planning authorities in England to engage constructive, actively and on an ongoing basis with prescribed bodies on the preparation of a Local Plan. The Duty, as a legal test, has now been rescinded by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, which received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023. This has replaced the legal test with a soundness test (in national policy). The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 will revoke the Duty to Cooperate in relation to the reformed plan making system. However, the Duty remains a legal requirement under the current local plans system and will continue to apply to Local Plans progressed within the current system.

Gypsies and Travellers: Defined in DCLG *Planning policy for traveller sites* 2024 annex 1 as “**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 or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.**”

Irish Traveller: Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in England. Irish Travellers have a distinct indigenous origin in Ireland and have been in England since the mid nineteenth century. They have been recognised as an ethnic group since August 2000 in England and Wales (O'Leary v Allied Domecq).

MHCLG: Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government. Previously renamed DLUHC Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in 2021 from the MHCLG in 2018. The ministry has oversight of policies to meet the needs Gypsies and Travellers in England.

Mobile home: Legally a 'caravan' but not usually capable of being moved by towing.

Negotiated Stopping: involves Local Authority officers making an agreement with Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised encampments. The agreement allows Travellers to stay either on the land they are camped on or move to a bit of land more suitable for all parties. The length of the agreement can also vary from 2 weeks to several months but tend to be around 28 days. The agreement is a local one and will vary but has so far included Travellers agreeing to leave sites clean and not make too

much noise and the Local Authority providing waste disposal and toilets, sometimes showers and water too. See www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk for more information.

Pitch: Area of land on a Gypsy/Traveller site occupied by one resident family; sometimes referred to as a plot, especially when referring to Travelling Showpeople. MHCLG *Planning policy for traveller sites* (December 2024) states that “**For the purposes of this planning policy, “pitch” means a pitch on a “gypsy and traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “travelling showpeople” site (often called a “yard”). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for “gypsies and travellers” and mixed-use plots for “travelling showpeople”, which may / will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow for the storage of equipment**”.

Plot: see pitch

PPTS: Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG, 2012 and 2015 editions, amended 2023 with latest edition published by MHCLG December 2024).

Roadside: Term used here to indicate families on unauthorised encampments, whether literally on the roadside or on other locations such as fields, car parks or other open spaces.

Roma: Migrant populations from Central and Eastern Europe that have arrived in the UK in the last half-century. It is an umbrella term used to describe sub-groups including Sinti, Lovari, Erldes and others.

Romany: Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in England. Romany Gypsies trace their ethnic origin back to migrations, probably from India, taking place at intervals since before 1500. Gypsies have been a recognised ethnic group for the purposes of British race relations legislation since 1988 (CRE V Dutton).

Sheds: On most residential Gypsy/Traveller sites 'shed' refers to a small basic building with plumbing amenities (bath/shower, WC, sink), which are provided at the rate of one per pitch/plot. Some contain a cooker and basic kitchen facilities.

Showpeople: Defined in MHCLG *Planning policy for traveller sites* (December 2024) as “**Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above**”.

Site (Gypsy and Traveller): An area of land laid out and used for Gypsy/Traveller caravans; often though not always comprising slabs and amenity blocks or ‘sheds’. An authorised site will have planning permission. An unauthorised development lacks planning permission.

Slab: An area of concrete or tarmac on sites allocated to a household for the parking of trailers (caravans)

Stopping places/stopover sites: A term used to denote an unauthorised temporary camping area tolerated by local authorities, used by Gypsies and Travellers for short-term encampments, and sometimes with the provision of temporary toilet facilities, water supplies and refuse collection services.

Tolerated site: An unauthorised encampment/site where a local authority has decided not to take enforcement action to seek its removal.

Trailers: Term used for mobile living vehicles used by Gypsies and Travellers; also referred to as caravans.

Transit site: A site intended for short-term use while in transit. The site is usually permanent and authorised, but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.

Unauthorised development: Establishment of Gypsy and Traveller sites without planning permission, usually on land owned by those establishing the site. Unauthorised development may involve ground works for roadways and hard standings. People parking caravans on their own land without planning permission are not Unauthorised Encampments in that they cannot trespass on their own land – they are therefore Unauthorised Developments and enforcement is always dealt with by local planning authorities enforcing planning legislation.

Unauthorised encampment: Land where Gypsies or Travellers reside in vehicles or tents without permission. Unauthorised encampments can occur in a variety of locations (roadside, car parks, parks, fields, etc.) and constitute trespass. The 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act made it a criminal offence to camp on land without the owner's consent. Unauthorised encampments fall into two main categories: those on land owned by local authorities and those on privately owned land. It is up to the landowner to take enforcement action in conjunction with the police.

Wagons: This is the preferred term for the vehicles used for accommodation by Showpeople.

Yards: Showpeople travel in connection with their work and therefore live, almost universally, in wagons. During the winter months these are parked up in what was traditionally known as 'winter quarters'. These 'yards' are now often occupied all year around by some family members.