

Gypsies and Travellers:



Simple ways to live together



EasyRead

What is in this booklet

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Equality and
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Commission

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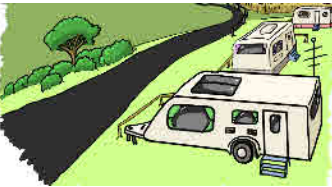
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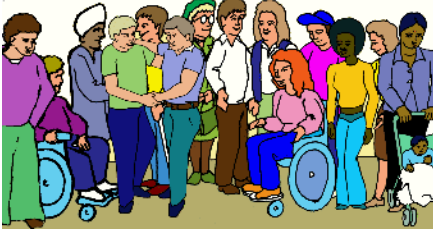
Who we are and what we do



The Equality and Human Rights Commission is making life fairer and more equal for everyone.

We work to make sure people:

- get their human rights
- get on better together
- have a fair chance to take part in society.



We make sure people follow the laws on treating people equally and fairly.



We help everyone understand more about why people are being treated unfairly and what can be done to make things better.

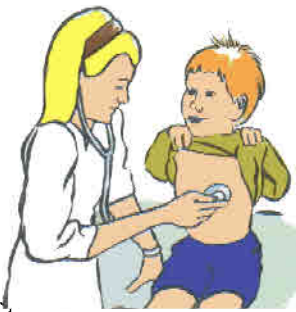
What is this report about?



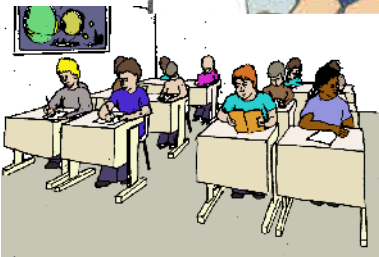
Gypsies and Travellers are part of today's Britain.



Some local councils have found new ways of meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.



Most Gypsies and Travellers want to keep their own way of life and use the health and education services they need.



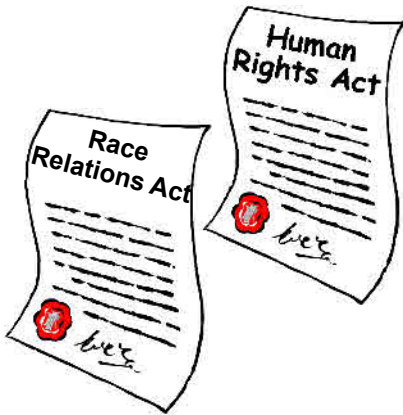
They also want to live peacefully with local communities.



But some Gypsies and Travellers still cause problems for local people in other areas because they live on unauthorised sites.



An **unauthorised site** is a place where Gypsies and Travellers live without permission from the local council.



The **Race Relations Act** and the **Human Rights Act** are laws that protect people from different races and ethnic groups from discrimination.

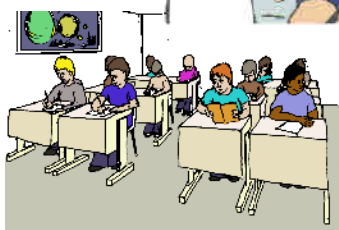
The law says Gypsies and Travellers are ethnic groups.



Discrimination is when someone treats you worse for many reasons. One of them is because of your ethnic group.



Of all the ethnic groups in Britain, Gypsies and Travellers need health care and school the most.

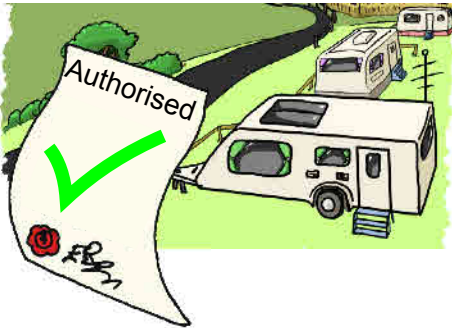


Why did we write this report?



The **Commission for Racial Equality** wrote an important report called 'Common Ground' in 2006.

It said there were not enough authorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers.



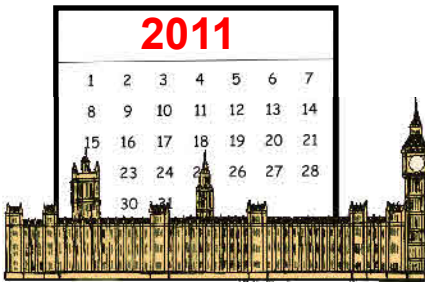
Authorised sites are places where the council has given permission for Gypsies and Travellers to live there.



Planning permission must be given for a place to be an authorised site.

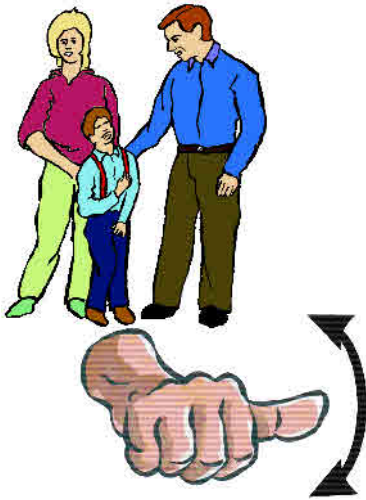


Part of our job is to look at what has been done for Gypsies and Travellers since 2006.



The Government has told all local councils in England to find more authorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers by 2011.

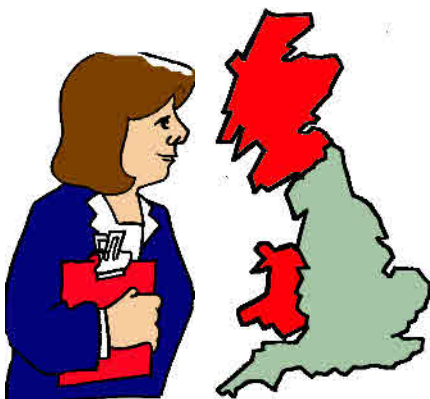
We want to see if the Government can meet its goal by 2011.



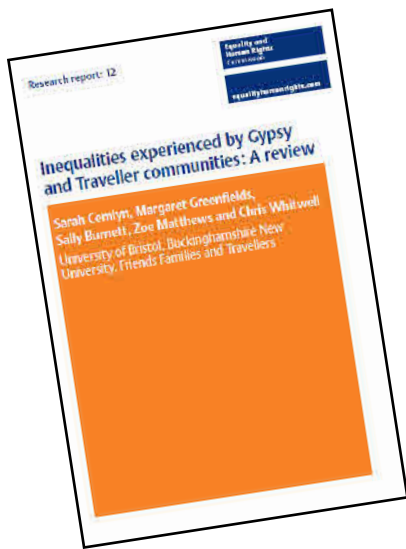
We want to find out if things have got better for Gypsies and Travellers in the last 3 years.



We have done some work to find out how things are going in England.



We are now finding out how things are in Wales and Scotland.



What we found out

We got a report written for us called 'Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities: A review'.

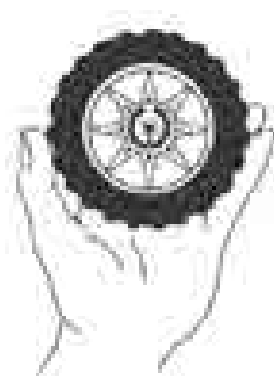
This was written by:



- The University of Bristol



- Buckinghamshire New University



- the Friends, Families and Travellers group.



It was a report about how Gypsies and Travellers were not being treated fairly or equally.



We found that many authorised sites do not meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.



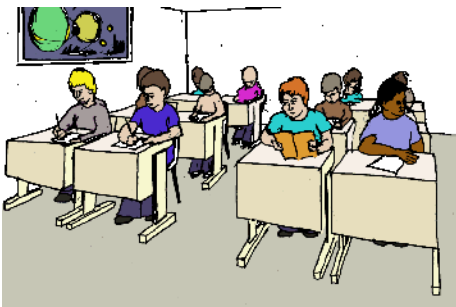
We also found that Gypsies and Travellers are not treated fairly or equally:

- at work or when they are looking for work

- in health and social care



- in school



- by the police and courts.





They also suffer from:

- racism and discrimination



- violence in their families.



Gypsies and Travellers face discrimination when they try to take part in community life.

You can see the full report on our website:

www.tinyurl.com/ehrc-research



We did find good examples of local councils working well with Gypsies and Travellers. You will find these at the end of this report.

Why give authorised sites to Gypsies and Travellers?



Everyone in Britain has the right to live in a good and safe home.



We think local councils can get a lot of information about the needs of Gypsies and Travellers from people who have worked well with them.



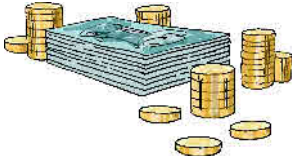
We can deal with other problems by making sure Gypsies and Travellers have enough good places to live.



Making authorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers is the answer to what could turn into a big problem.

It is good for local councils

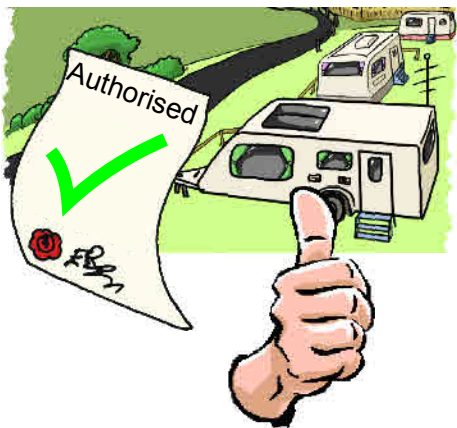
Forcing Gypsies and Travellers to leave unauthorised sites costs the council and taxpayers lots of money every year.



They would not have to spend so much money if they found more authorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers.



If they found more authorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers they would make money from things like rent and council tax.



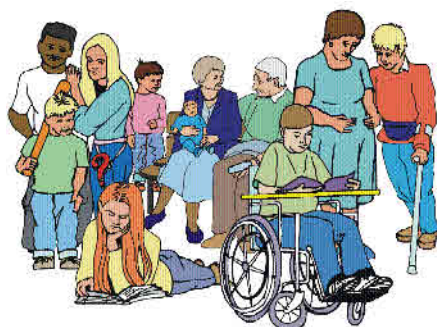
It is good for the community



People in the community get angry and frightened when Gypsies and Travellers live on unauthorised sites.



Unauthorised sites are normally in places that are not safe or clean. They can cause health problems and spoil the land.



We have found that well-run authorised sites can become an important part of the local community.

How are local councils getting on?



We got another report written for us called 'Assessing local housing authorities' progress in meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities in England'.



It is about how well local councils are doing at finding good and safe sites for Gypsies and Travellers.



This was written by the University of Salford and the University of Birmingham.

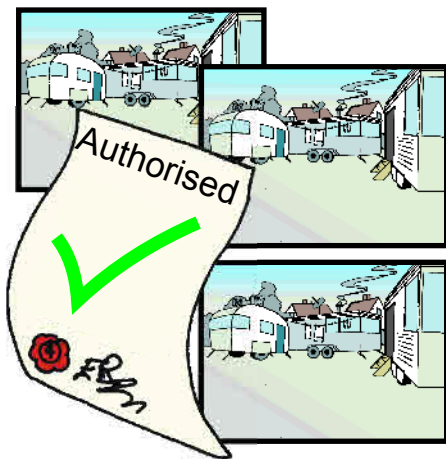


We sent surveys to all local councils in England in October 2008.

Not everybody answered, but we got enough information from the people who did.

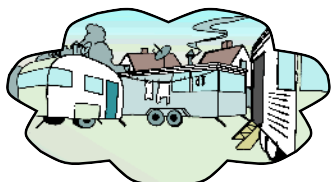


We also used other information we found about the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

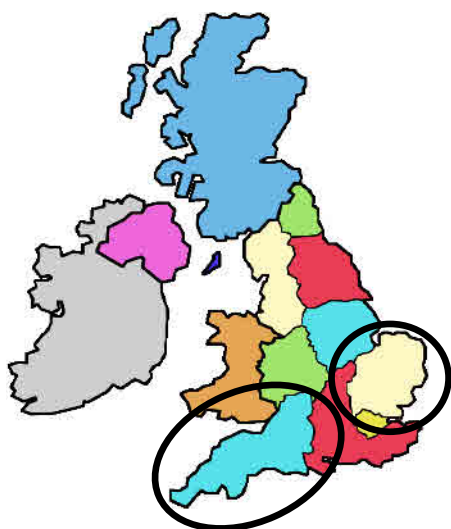


What we found

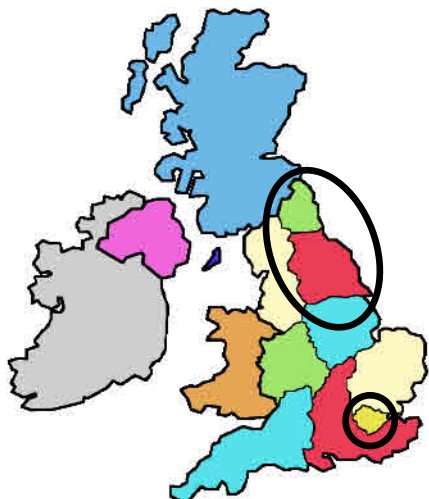
There are more authorised sites now than in 2006.



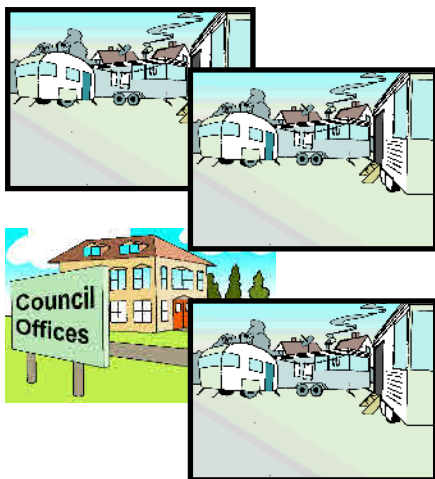
But local councils need to find a lot more places for Gypsies and Travellers to live before 2011.



The East and South West of England councils need to find the most authorised sites.



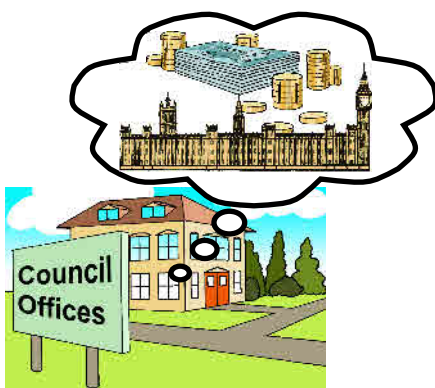
North East England and London have to find the least.



Only a few local councils will have enough places for Gypsies and Travellers by 2011.



But local councils are making better use of the planning system.



Local councils are using Government money to make new authorised sites and make old ones better.

How can we get over these problems?



It will be hard for local councils to get support from communities and the Government to make new places for Gypsies and Travellers.



But we think local councils can get over these problems if everybody works together.



Political parties

Political parties need to take a strong lead to make this situation better.



Local councils

Gypsies and Travellers get on better with local communities when council members take charge of Gypsy and Traveller matters.



Newspapers and news reporters

The news often has bad stories about Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites.



If Gypsies and Travellers have good and safe places to live, there will be good stories about them instead.



Working together with Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsy and Traveller groups often have different needs.



Most local councils find it hard to include them in their plans.



Local councils must train their staff and learn from other councils who work well with Gypsies and Travellers.

What needs to be done?



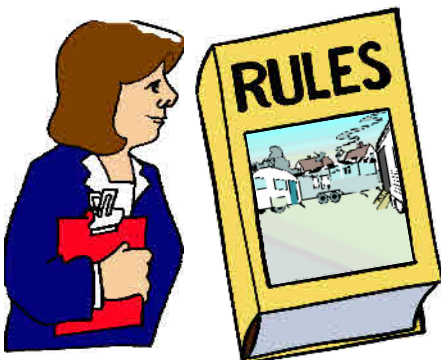
Local councils need to:

- promise to find answers to long-term problems
- find enough authorised sites and make sure they are run properly
- talk to everybody in the local community, including Gypsies and Travellers.



They can also make things better by:

- making their work with Gypsies and Travellers part of the way they work
- looking at their own rules again about places for Gypsies and Travellers to live





- helping council members get the right training



- helping Gypsies and Travellers find good pieces of land and help them get permission to live there



- dealing with racism in planning permission.



The Government can:

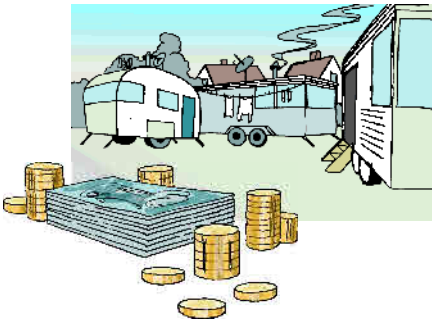
- make rules to check how authorised sites are doing



- make sure that Gypsy and Traveller issues are part of the Government's plans for including people



- collect and use information about finding good places for Gypsies and Travellers to live



- make sure that more money is given to cover what is missing from the 2011 goals to find more authorised sites



- think about asking the Independent Task Force on Gypsies and Travellers to meet again. (This is a special team that looks at things to do with Gypsies and Travellers.)



- make sure their plans and rules do not stop new authorised sites being made



- make new plans to find good places for Gypsies and Travellers after 2011.

What other organisations can do



The **Audit Commission** should make sure Gypsy and Traveller issues are part of its checks.



The **Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government** should start its new training scheme for local councils.



The **Homes and Communities Agency** should make sure they include Gypsies and Travellers in their housing plans.



The **Planning Inspectorate** should look at how quickly places get planning permission where they are needed.



The Royal Town Planning Institute should offer better information about holding public meetings.



The National Association of Local Councils should make sure parish, town and community councils know more about Gypsies and Travellers.



The Department of Health should plan to cut down discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers in health care.



It should also offer advice and training to health councils and doctors.



The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills should take a look at Traveller Education Support Services and work with Gypsies and Travellers to stop bullying.



The Association of Chief Police Officers should find good ways of working with Gypsies and Travellers.



The Press Complaints Commission should look at their rules for groups to complain about news stories.

What will the Commission do?

We will:



- make Gypsy and Traveller issues part of local governments' work



- get all the big political parties to talk about getting on with Gypsies and Travellers



- work with newspapers and news reporters to make sure they know more about Gypsies and Travellers



- support good ways of working with Gypsies and Travellers



- help local councils find more places for Gypsies and Travellers to live.

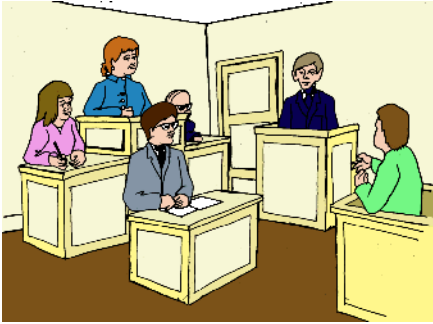


We think the examples of good ways of working in this report will help other local councils.



We will take another look at how well things are going in 2010.

Getting involved in court cases



The Commission has the power to get involved in court cases. This is called legal intervention.



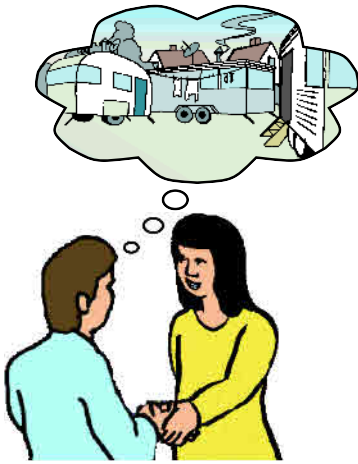
We want to make it easier for local councils to know how to deal with Gypsies and Travellers under the law.



Our aim is to show how the Race Relations and the Disability Discrimination Acts affect Gypsies and Travellers when local councils force them to leave unauthorised sites.



We have tried to make it clear how planning inspectors can help local councils to obey the law.



When they make decisions about planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller sites, they must treat them fairly and equally.

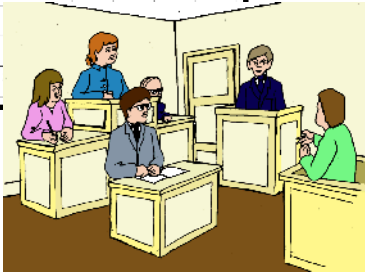
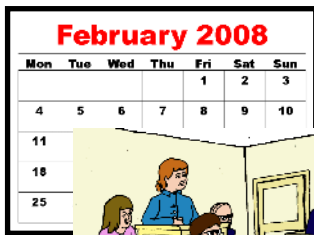


We also want to help Gypsies and Travellers to know what their rights and duties are.



Duties are what the law says they must do.

Cases we got involved in

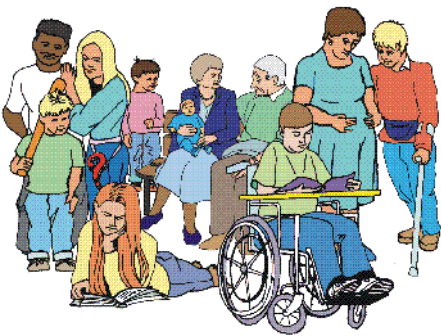


Case 1: Dale Farm

The Traveller community at Dale Farm in Essex took Basildon Council to Court in February 2008.



The Council had decided to force the community to leave the site.



There were 150 children and some disabled people living there.



We got involved to tell the Court about how race and disability discrimination laws work when councils decide to do this.



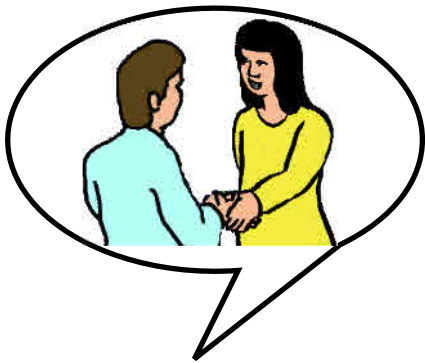
We helped the Court to see how councils can make these decisions fairly and obey the law at the same time.



The Court said the Council's decision to force the Dale Farm Traveller community to leave was against the law.



This was because the Council had not thought about many things. Like making sure people have a good home to live in.



But the Court said the council had treated them fairly and equally.



The Council was not happy with the result and asked for the case to be heard again at the Court of Appeal. This is a higher Court than the High Court. It can change the High Court's decisions.



The Council won their case in December 2008.





The Dale Farm Traveller community got legal aid in March 2009.



They want to take their case to the House of Lords. This is a higher court than the Court of Appeal and can change its decisions.

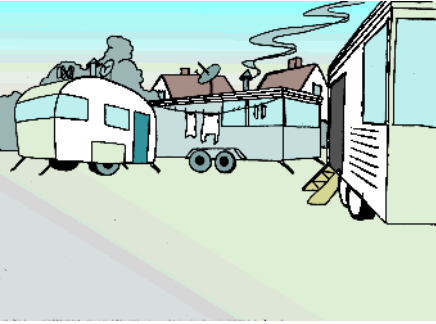


We are working closely with the Dale Farm Traveller community and the Council to find an answer that everyone is happy with.



We think the council needs to find somewhere else for the Traveller community to live and tell everyone how they will do this.

Case 2: Bromley



A Romany Gypsy and some Irish Travellers were not given planning permission to build a caravan site in 2008.



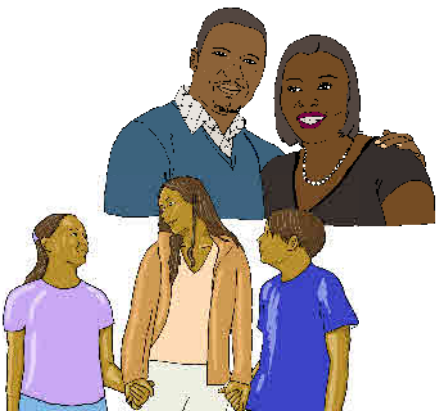
They did not agree with this decision.



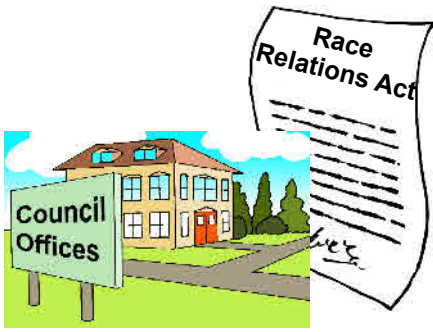
They said the planning permission inspector did not treat them fairly and equally under the race equality law.



Race equality means to treat someone fairly and equally no matter what their race is.



Race is someone's colour or ethnic group. The law says Gypsies and Travellers are ethnic groups.



We got involved to tell the Court about what the race equality law says local councils must do.



We told the Court that planning inspectors and local councils should think about how they obey the law when they look at planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller sites.



The Court said the inspector had obeyed the law, and would not hear the case again.

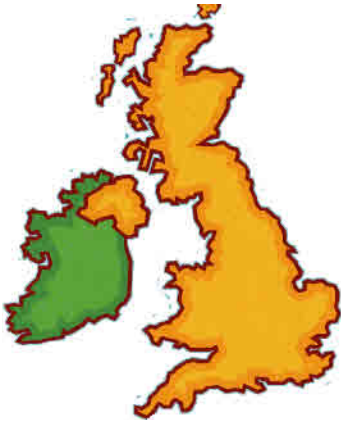


But the Court said it was important for Gypsies and Travellers to have the same chances as everybody else.



The Court also agreed that planning inspectors should think about the race equality law when making decisions about planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

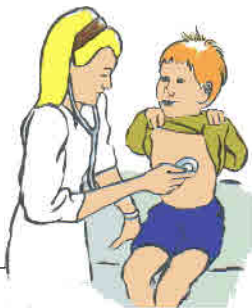
Working well with Gypsies and Travellers



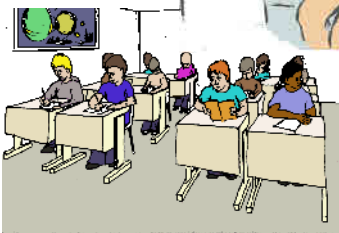
Gypsies and Travellers have lived in Britain for a long time.



This report has shown why it is good for local councils and the Government to get on well with Gypsies and Travellers.



Most Gypsies and Travellers just want the same things as everybody else in life.





Here are some examples of good ways of working with Gypsies and Travellers:

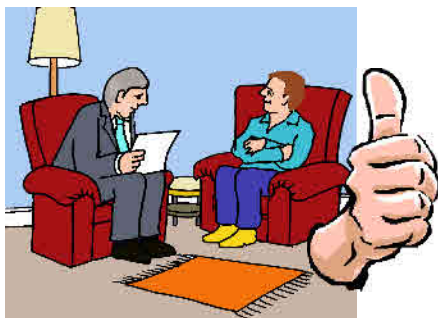
Fenland District Council



Gypsies and Travellers have been in the Fenland area for a long time. Fenland is in the East of England.



Fenland District Council owns and runs 5 authorised sites. It wants to get permission for another 108 places.



The council gets on well with Gypsies and Travellers.



The council helps Gypsies and Travellers to get permission to live on their own private sites.



Bristol City Council

Bristol City Council did not have any authorised sites in 1996.



Every year, lots of local people complained about Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites.



The council was spending lots of money every year on dealing with the problems.



The council built 2 authorised sites and things got much better.

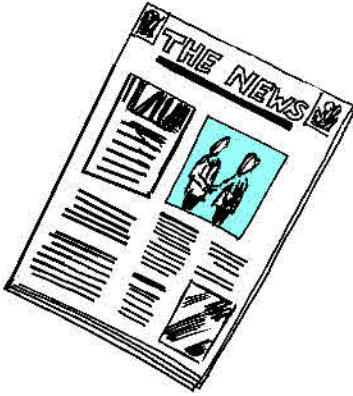


Warwickshire

A Traveller family moved onto land they had bought near a town in Warwickshire in 2008. But it was not an authorised site.



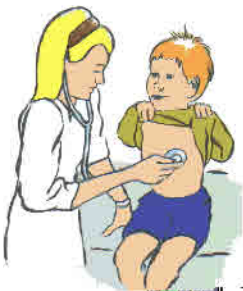
People in the town complained and local councillors tried to force them to leave.



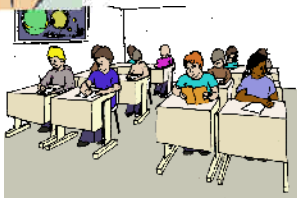
The story got in the newspapers.



The local mayor visited the Traveller family.

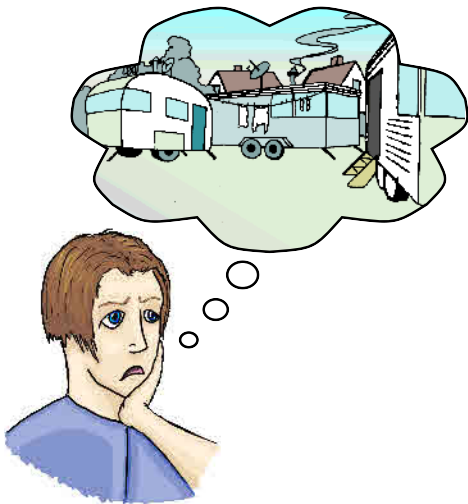


He found that they just wanted health care and school for their children.





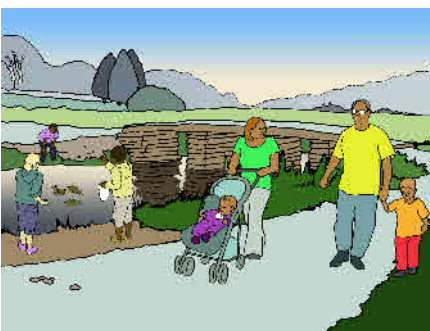
The mayor said they could stay if they behaved themselves and respected people in the community.



People in the town were frightened. They did not agree with what the mayor had said.



The mayor asked the Traveller family to come to a town meeting to answer questions.



The family got permission to stay and get on well with the people in town.

Gloria Buckley, MBE, Romany Gypsy



Gloria Buckley runs 3 authorised sites in Norfolk and Suffolk.

She was the first Romany woman in England to get an MBE. An MBE is a special award from the Queen for doing good work.



There were terrible problems between the Gypsies and their neighbours when she started running the site in Norfolk.



But everything worked out, and the site got an award for making community life better.

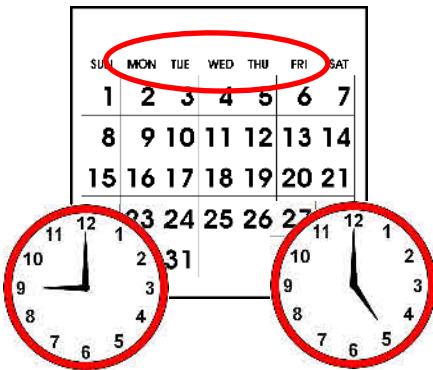


The Travellers and their neighbours are now one community.

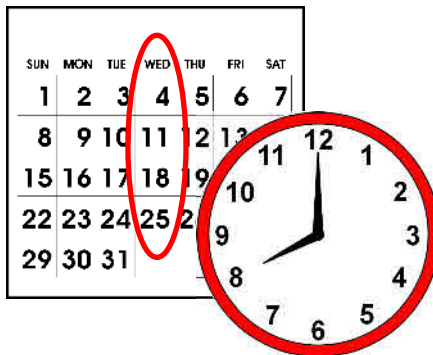
Contact us

You can find out more or get in touch with us on our website at:

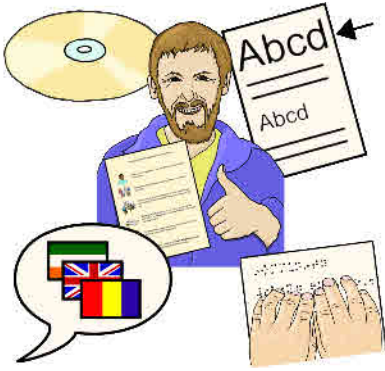
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On **Wednesday** we stay open till **8pm**.



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