

WANDSWORTH

Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment

Local Plan Publication (Regulation 19) Version
April 2022



Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment - London Borough of Wandsworth

April 2019 (with updates, January & April 2022)

1. Executive Summary

Planning and Local Context

- 1.1 National guidance to inform local planning authorities' assessments of need is set out in 'Planning policy for Traveller sites' (2015). The definition includes "gypsies and travellers" and "travelling showpeople"; for planning related purposes it excludes those who have permanently ceased from travelling. In drawing up local plans, local planning authorities also need to demonstrate that they have considered their duty to co-operate with neighbouring boroughs on policy matters that may have an impact beyond the borough boundary.
- 1.2 There is currently one authorised Gypsy and Traveller site in the London Borough of Wandsworth, consisting of 11 pitches (pitches 1 and 2 have been combined). The site is managed by the Wandsworth Council Southern Area Housing Team. The site also includes 11 Council-maintained permanent utility blocks with each unit servicing a single dwelling.
- 1.3 Weekly visits are undertaken by officers from Estate Services to inspect the condition of the site and check on communal areas; the inspecting officer(s) will also report back on any issues raised by residents. Other site visits are carried out as required in response to specific management and maintenance issues. Recent site works have included improvements to the local amenities, including the utility blocks, and to ensure safety on site, gas meters have been removed and new electrical meters have been installed, with regular electrical checks carried out. Wandsworth Council is also currently considering the installation of new electrical supplies and improvement to drainage and hard surfaces. The adjoining freeholders are also currently looking at improvement of the boundary fences.
- 1.4 The purpose of this research is to inform the Council's 2019 Local Plan response and Duty to Cooperate, both of which are being overseen by the Wandsworth Council Planning department. This information will also be used to inform the Council's Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) which is currently being commissioned for completion in 2019/20.

2. Demographic information

- 2.1 At the last UK census (2011), 163 respondents in Wandsworth Borough reported their ethnicity as 'White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller', amounting to 0.1% of the Borough's population. This matched the 2011 country-wide 'White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller' proportionate population (0.1%).
- 2.2 The Government Count of Gypsies and Travellers occurs twice annually, including both authorised and unauthorised sites. The information is supplied by local authorities, with the most recently published count taking place in July 2021. See **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Figures for London Borough of Wandsworth from Government Count of Gypsies and Travellers January 2016 – July 2021.¹

	No. dwellings on authorised sites (with planning permission)	No. dwellings on unauthorised sites (without planning permission)
January 2016	10	0
July 2016	10	0
January 2017	11	0
July 2017	11	0
January 2018	11	0
July 2018	11	0
January 2019	11*	0
July 2019	11*	0
January 2020	11*	0
July 2021	12*	0

* updated April 2022. Note that there are 11 formal pitches, though pitches 1 and 2 were combined.

3. Housing needs - previous studies

- 3.1 In March 2008, the Greater London Authority (GLA) commissioned the Pan London Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA), which provided an assessment of overall units of accommodation which could be required for Gypsies and Travellers in the Borough in terms of both pitches and bricks and mortar accommodation.
- 3.2 The study provided maximum and minimum projected 'need' figures for new traveller pitches in each London borough, broken down into two time periods (2007-2012 and 2012-2017).
- 3.3 A 2017 review of the projections combined the cumulative 2007-2017 need for residential pitches and established a midpoint (median) need figure for the years 2007-2017. The results are shown in the table below:

Table 2: GLA Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Topic Paper 2017 (Fordham Study) – Figures for Wandsworth²

Timescale	2007-2012	2012-2017	2007-2017
Min need	1	2	3
Max need	7	3	10
Midpoint need	-	-	7

- 3.4 Research into the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers was included in Wandsworth's 2012 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).³

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 'Count of Traveller caravans: live tables (July 2021)', [Traveller caravan count: July 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/traveller-caravan-count-july-2021)

² Greater London Authority, 'Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Topic Paper 2017', https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_topic_paper_gypsy_and_traveller_accomodation.pdf

³ Wandsworth Council, 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012 (Paper No. 13-160)'

3.5 The SHMA included a mini-survey that was undertaken of Gypsies and Travellers living on the authorised Council site on Trewint Street, Earlsfield (contact was made with seven out of eleven households). Attempts were also made to contact those who were on waiting lists for the site and living in the Borough (two out of seven households), the small number of Gypsies and Travellers known to the Council and living in bricks and mortar housing, and any Travelling Showpeople who could be identified as living in the Borough.

3.6 The survey included the following:

- Reason for living in the area (voluntary, involuntary etc.)
- Future residency intentions (short term, long term etc.)
- Future residency intentions for individual members of households
- Type of current accommodation
- Potential site overcrowding issues.

3.7 Survey forms were completed with seven households on the Trewint Street Caravan Site. The findings revealed that:

- All (seven) responding households that were living on the site at the time wanted to live in Wandsworth
- Six households were living in their current accommodation through choice
- Two households indicated that their pitch at the time was too small
- Four households indicated an issue with disability or serious illness but no household indicated a need for adaptation
- No household indicated an intention of moving off the site within the next five years
- There were seven households on the waiting list, two of which were living in the Borough.

4. Accommodation need 2011/12 – 2018/19

4.1 As shown by **Figure 1** below, in the period following the most recent Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment in Wandsworth (2011/12), the number of households on the traveller site waiting list ranged from 1 to 2 households.

Figure 1: Traveller waiting list size 2011/12 - 2018/19



* as of April 2019.

5. Accommodation needs assessment update (2019/20)

5.1 As of April 2022, the Trewint Street Caravan Site remains the only licensed traveller site in the London Borough of Wandsworth. The site currently consists of 11 pitches, with 7 households currently residing at the site. 1 household currently occupies 2 pitches (pitches 7 and 8), and there are currently 3 vacant pitches. Overall, there are 21 residents living on the site.

Table 3: Trewint Street Caravan site population (April 2019)

Pitch no.	No. Households	No. residents	No. Adults (over 18)	No. Children (under 18)
1	1	6	2	4
3	1	1	1	0
4	1	2	2	0
5	1	3	1	2
6	1	2	1	1
7, 8	1	4	1	3
9	Void	N/A	N/A	N/A
10	Void	N/A	N/A	N/A
11*	Void*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*
12	1	3	1	2
	Total	Total	Total	Total
	7	21	9	12

* A household has now been pre-allocated to this pitch (April 2019).

5.2 As shown in **Figure 4**, 5 out of 7 occupying households include both adults and children, showing that Trewint Street has a predominantly familial and inter-generational composition. The current average household size is 3 members per household.

- 5.3 Since 2009, two new households have moved to the site/gained a licence; there has been a clear decrease in resident turnover, with 10 new licences having been granted in the period between 2000/01 and 2011/12.
- 5.4 As of April 2019, there are currently 0 Gypsy and Traveller households on the waiting list for the Trewint Street site, due to one household recently being pre-allocated to pitch 11. The other household previously on the waiting list has been removed due to a change in circumstances. There is however, one household that has declared an interest in joining the waiting list, however, paperwork is yet to be submitted to the relevant Area Housing Team.
- 5.5 Although there are also Travellers that might be currently accommodated elsewhere in the Borough and in the surrounding areas, there have been no unauthorised encampments in recent years, nor any applications for private sites which would give an indication that there is no additional need/demand.
- 5.6 This low demand is further evidenced by the 2018/19 General Needs Queue figures, which currently includes 5 households waiting for accommodation where the main applicant identifies as 'Gypsy, Romany, Irish Traveller'. All applicants currently have 50 points in Band C (overcrowded by one bedroom).
- 5.7 As identified in paragraph 1.1 this information will be used to inform discussions with other neighbouring authorities to determine the best approach to meet collective needs. Local authorities should actively plan to protect existing Gypsy and Traveller accommodation capacity, and this should be taken into account when considering new residential developments to ensure inclusive, balanced and cohesive communities are created.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Since 2009 there has been a significant decrease in both resident turnover and demand for traveller pitch licences in Wandsworth Borough. Resident feedback from 2012 also indicated that occupant households tend to be settled on the site with no intention to vacate in the short term. Additionally, the survey indicated that where households were living in bricks and mortar there was no wish or need to return to accommodation that might require provision of a pitch. There is also no evidence that the Borough needs to consider temporary site needs for show people with no approaches having been made in this respect, according to records, over the intervening period since the last analysis was undertaken.
- 6.2 As of April 2019, due to the low turnover rate and relatively settled status of the occupying households, the three vacant pitches, and a current lack of a waiting list for the site, there is no evidenced requirement or need for additional pitches on the Trewint Street site or elsewhere in the wider Borough.

Update, January 2022.

The London Borough of Wandsworth undertook an assessment of the needs of the gypsy and traveller community in early 2019, and published the outcome of this work in a report dated April 2019. It concluded that there was no evidenced requirement or need for additional pitches either on the existing Trewint Street site or elsewhere in the wider Borough.

This assessment was based on a definition of gypsies and travellers which was later included in the Intend to Publish version of the London Plan in December 2019, at Policy H14(B).

The Secretary of State, in his letter and annex of March 2020, directed the Mayor to amend the policy by removing H14(B) on the basis that it provided a much wider definition of gypsies and travellers which was not in conformity with the national policy set out in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (August 2015) and not justified in the London context.

This change of definition does not have any consequences for the assessment of need for gypsy and traveller pitches in Wandsworth, and the conclusion remains the same.

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