



Ministry
of Justice

The Right Honourable
David Gauke MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of
State for Justice

Baroness Janet Whitaker and Kate Green MP
Co-Chairs,
All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies Travellers and Roma
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

MoJ ref: MC 64022

7 January 2019

Dear Janet & Kate

GYPSY, TRAVELLER AND ROMA

Thank you for your letter of 28 November on behalf of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsy Traveller and Roma regarding the Government consultation on 'Powers for dealing with unauthorised developments and encampments' and your interest in meeting to discuss this.

I note the APPG's comments about the Gypsy Traveller and Roma (GRT) community and the disadvantages they suffer. I also note your concerns about the Government's review of powers which you consider had an emphasis on strengthening existing powers. As you note, my Department is not responsible for the measures you propose in response to dealing with unauthorised encampments, which lie instead with the Home Office (HO) and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). MHCLG and HO are responsible for the policies in relation to the provision of traveller sites and managing and where necessary removing unauthorised developments and encampments, while MoJ is responsible with HMCTS and the judiciary for the court process through which local authorities and private landlords can take action.

I am mindful that any new policies in this area should be measured and proportionate. We have been working closely with MHCLG and the HO to consider the responses to the consultation and will announce the way forward in due course.

I should point out that as far as court procedures are concerned, the court will, of course, always have due regard to treating parties fairly and equally and are especially mindful of the needs of children and vulnerable adults.

I should also draw your attention to ongoing work in my Department to tackle some of the issues you raise in your letter. As you will be aware, the Lammy Review highlighted the disproportionate number of GRT people in contact with the justice system and the disparities in their treatment and outcomes. Her Majesty's Prisons and Probations Service (HMPPS) has since taken forward work to tailor its approach to each of the prison and probation recommendations to meet the needs of GRT people as part of a dedicated action plan in development. MoJ has also stepped up its engagement with the GRT

community, establishing a stakeholder forum to inform Criminal Justice System (CJS) policy and operations.

You mention in your letter the lack of data related to GRT people in public services. To this end, alongside efforts in HMPPS to improve disclosure rates, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has now moved to using Self-Defined 18+1 standard for collecting information about ethnicity, which will now enable them to capture those identifying as 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller'. GRT children are also one of three cohorts prioritised within youth justice policy for particular focus over the coming year, which I hope will yield insight and progress for a group that is substantially overrepresented in youth custody. I hope that these initiatives will begin to bear fruit in improving outcomes for GRT people.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Gauke', with a stylized flourish at the end.

RT HON DAVID GAUKE MP