



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

28 November 2022

Dear Minister Shapps,

Re: Addressing exclusions from the Energy Bills Support Scheme

We write in our capacity as Co-chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma about how the energy price crisis is affecting Gypsy and Traveller communities, and to urge government to take steps to address these.

Around a quarter of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK live in caravans or other mobile structures, on local authority sites, private sites or living nomadically (on roadside camps or on the waterways for the liveaboard boater community). For those living in caravans or mobile homes, arrangements for energy use are frequently different to those living in bricks and mortar housing, with subsequent inflated and disproportionately high costs.

There is little individual consumer choice for many living on local authority sites, whereby the local authority have one electricity contract which services all the households on the site, with many also on pre-payment meters. Also, many local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites do not have mains gas, meaning households need to use gas cylinders for heating and cooking appliances. The price of gas cylinders is rising dramatically.

Despite rising energy costs, many Gypsies and Travellers living in caravans and other mobile homes are excluded from the Energy Bills Support Scheme because of the way that it is designed. We were encouraged to see the [announcement](#) on 29 July, and in response to my [parliamentary question](#) of 6 September, committing to address the exclusions from the Energy Bills Support Scheme. However, some time has passed with no news yet on how excluded families, who are already at greater risk of fuel poverty, will be supported.

It is important for the Department to consider not only those that live on Gypsy and Traveller sites, but also those living on roadside camps or in boats on the waterways, whose electricity supply comes from using generators.

We understand departmental officials have been in contact with civil society organisations to discuss some of these issues, but time is upon us, with many families deeply concerned about how they will manage through winter. We hope that you will agree that this is a pressing matter and can update us on progress on this.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Mary Kelly Foy' written in a cursive style. The second signature on the right is 'Janet Whitaker', also in a cursive style.

Mary Kelly Foy MP and Baroness Janet Whitaker
Co-chairs, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma