

**From:** Trudy Aspinwall  
**Sent:** 16 June 2023 14:21  
**To:** Local Government and Housing Committee  
**Subject:** Follow up on Inquiry into the provision of Gypsy and Travellers sites

Afternoon John  
Hope you are well

We are writing to follow up on your Committee's Inquiry from last year on the provision of sites for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities and the recommendations accepted in full by the Minister Mindful of the link with the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP) which is cited as the key delivery driver for many of those recommendations I am also copying in Jenny Rathbone and the Equality and Social Justice Committee who I know intend to undertake some scrutiny of the implementation of the ARWAP

I am copying in my coalition colleagues here who assisted in the giving or submitting of evidence to the Inquiry and the development of the ARWAP

I am writing to express concern and ask that your Committee and any other relevant scrutiny mechanisms in the Senedd take urgent steps to hold the Minister and the Welsh government to account on their commitments.

To our knowledge not one of the recommendations in your committee's report has yet been actioned, and not one of the actions in the ARWAP relating specifically to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller accommodation and other areas have been progressed either.

If there has been any progress it has not been communicated ( or done in co-production) with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities or with any of the advocacy and community networks and organisations who support Gypsy, Traveller and Roma families

There remains no 'team' in place in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller policy team in Welsh Government and the acting official at Deputy Director level who has made some progress in understanding the issues and engaging with some representatives from the communities and organisations is about to move on in mid -July now that the substantive Deputy Director post has been filled.

There appear to be no resources being allocated or prioritised at all in any sustainable way to realise the commitments to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (albeit commitments or actions to support Roma communities are entirely absent from the ARWAP in any specific way and also in the priorities of Welsh Government ) and the same can be said in that migration official time and policy is mostly directed at 'forced' migrants i.e. Asylum seekers and refugees, on funding EUSS advice and the needs of more EU Citizens facing significant barriers, discrimination and exclusion ( of whom Roma communities form a large part) are not provided for and fall betwixt and between policy and service portfolios

Communities we work with are fast losing patience or any trust in these commitments ( and as you know this was fragile before the inquiry and the ARWAP came into place) and it is left to a few of us to try to mitigate this damage

Please, there is urgent need for follow up scrutiny on these issues.

We are happy to discuss further with yourselves or Committee clerks the detail of each of the recommendations and the actions and provide further evidence of the unacceptable lack of progress

which points to the lack of prioritisation of staff resources in this area of work – many of these are interconnected of course – the complete standstill on reviewing the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments is impacting on planning and developing new sites or the planning of transit provision; the fact that no funding has been allocated ( ARWAP action) to organisations to support Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month ( whilst other communities and important dates clearly have received new funding to commemorate or celebrate) further leads to the lack of valuing of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities here in Wales – its notable that the Welsh Government have not even marked June as the History Month

We note in the [Ministerial response](#) to your report that the only time limited actions appear to be the re-commissioning for the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller specific advocacy and advice service ( which I have managed since its inception) which was given a 3 month timescale in the response and in the ARWAP ( not likely now to be re-commissioned before March 2024) and a pre-summer recess deadline for : Recommendation 20 The Committee recommends that: “The Welsh Government should provide an update on the work undertaken to provide transit pitches across Wales before the Senedd’s summer recess in 2023.” Response: Accept **We will provide an update on progress on provision of transit pitches before summer recess 2023 as requested.**

We look forward to receiving your response once you have had time to consider what steps you may be able to take

Thank you

Trudy

**Trudy Aspinwall**

**Team Manager**

**[Travelling Ahead: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Advice & Advocacy Service](#) / Teithio Ymlaen: Gwasanaeth Cyngor ac Eiriolaeth Sipsiwn, Roma a Theithwyr**

**Freephone Advice Line: 0808 802 0025**

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