

Gypsies/Travellers in Scotland: Summary of the Evidence Base, Summer 2013

1. Introduction

This paper presents the existing evidence base on Gypsies/Travellers in Scotland, drawing upon data from a range of sources. It anticipates emerging evidence, some of which is scheduled to become available over the next year, and highlights information gaps.

2. Background

The Scottish Government recognises that Gypsies/Travellers are a particularly discriminated against and marginalised group, and it is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all of Scotland's Gypsies/Travellers. Current evidence sources provide some valuable data on the group, but there are some important information gaps. The Scottish Government is working to develop a richer, more relevant and joined-up evidence base to help measure progress towards positive outcomes for Gypsies/Travellers, including improved targeting of services and reduced discrimination.

Two recent Equal Opportunities Committee enquiries, '[Gypsy/Travellers and Care](#)'⁽¹⁾ and '[Where Gypsy/Travellers Live](#)'⁽²⁾ have highlighted the circumstances of Gypsies/Travellers and made recommendations on how their lives could be improved. A more complete and robust evidence base will help the Scottish Government measure the impact of its work to improve the lives of Gypsies/Travellers.

In April 2013, the Scottish Government demonstrated its commitment to improving circumstances for Gypsies/Travellers by publishing the following [Equality Outcome](#) - "*Gypsies/Travellers experience less discrimination and more positive attitudes towards their culture and way of life*"⁽³⁾

3. Existing Evidence

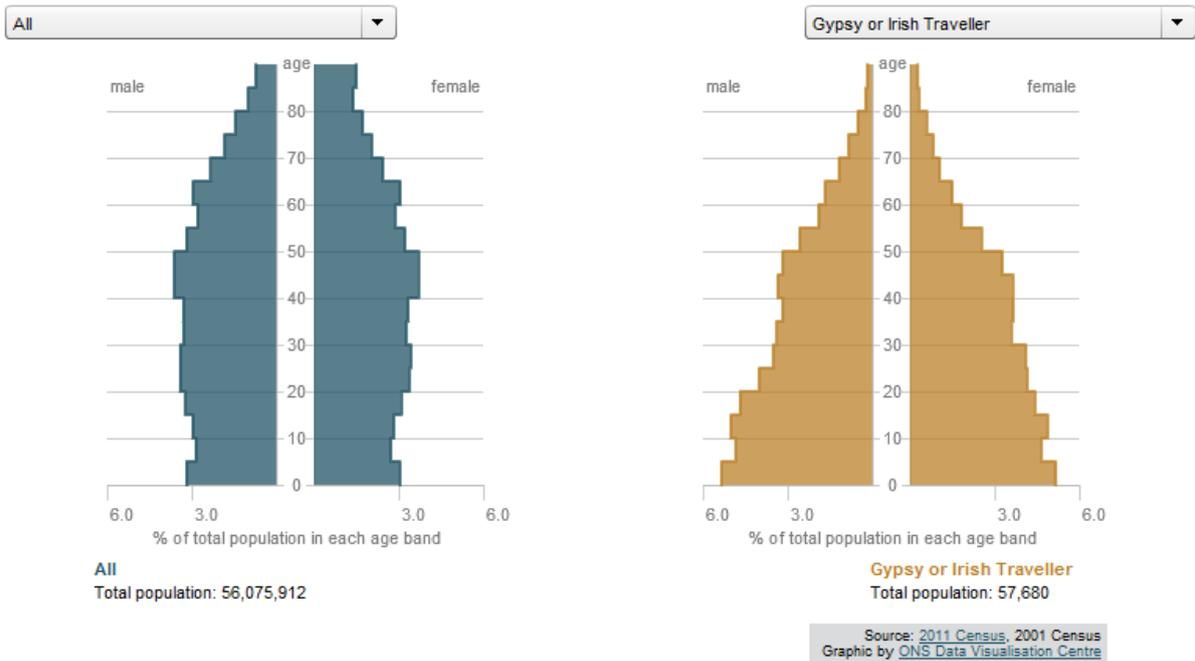
Demographics and Accommodation

Gypsy/Traveller Population

- At present there are no official population estimates for the Gypsy/Traveller population in Scotland. However, the 2011 Census recorded Gypsies/Travellers as a separate ethnic group for the first time and these results will be released later in 2013.
- At the last published [official count](#)⁽⁴⁾ of Gypsies/Travellers in 2009 there were just over **2,000 people** living on Council/Registered Social Landlord (RSL) sites, private sites and unauthorised encampments in Scotland.

- A review of the count estimated that it may only record between a third and a half of the total Gypsy/Traveller population in Scotland ⁽⁵⁾.
- Ethnic group statistics released recently by the [ONS](#) ⁽⁶⁾ from the 2011 Census show that 0.1% of the population in England and Wales identified as 'White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller'. This accounted for just under 58,000 people and the below graphic shows that the age profile of the group is much younger than the general population.

2011 Census: Population estimates for England & Wales, by Ethnicity



Accommodation

- At the last count in 2009 there were just under **700 Gypsy/Traveller households** living on Council/Registered Social Landlord (RSL) sites, private sites and unauthorised encampments in Scotland. There was no consistent upward or downward trend from 2002, but the number of households varied from year to year.
- At this time there were 31 Council/RSL sites across 23 different council areas in Scotland - 28 of these sites operated all year round and 3 only opened in the summer. These sites provided a total of 478 pitches.
- There were 22 private sites at the time of the last count, 17 of which operated all year round and 5 of which were seasonal, open only in the summer months. 161 households were living on private sites.
- The number of unauthorised encampment locations occupied on the day of the last count stood at 46 across 18 local authorities. Over the six months to

July 2009 there were 195 encampment locations used. The national average encampment size over this six month period was 5.2 caravans.

- The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) now has regulatory responsibility for local authorities and social landlords who manage Gypsy/Traveller sites and there is a [Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome](#) ⁽⁷⁾ relating specifically to Gypsies/Travellers: **Sites are well maintained and managed.**
- In 2012 the SHR published the report: [Priorities of Gypsies/Travellers and Factored Owners](#) ⁽⁸⁾ outlining the key requirements and priorities of both Gypsies/Travellers tenants and their landlords, including their expectations of each other.
- There is limited evidence available about patterns of travel for Gypsies/Travellers in Scotland and there are multiple factors which influence the travel activities of Gypsies/Travellers.
- Both 'push' and 'pull' factors were found to influence the choice made by some Gypsies/Travellers to live in housing. 'Push' factors included lack of space on existing official sites, disputes/difficulties with other families and official sites with unused capacity not being seen as an option for a variety of reasons, most significantly because of negative family associations and fear of intimidation. 'Pull' factors, those in favour of moving to housing, included a desire to improve health circumstances, looking for a change and to 'have a break from relatives' ⁽⁹⁾.

Housing Need and Demand Assessments (HNDAs) and Planning Policy

- [The Housing \(Scotland\) Act \(2001\)](#) ⁽¹⁰⁾ requires Local Authorities (LAs) to prepare and provide to Ministers as requested a local housing strategy supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. LAs produce Housing Need and Demand Assessments (HNDAs) which contribute to this requirement of the Act. In most cases, this includes evidence about the housing needs of Gypsies/Travellers, with some LAs commissioning more in-depth research due to the limited information collected by the official count. LAs translate this evidence into housing policy when they produce their Local Housing Strategies (LHSs). The role of the Scottish Government is to quality assure HNDAs and to encourage LAs to fully consider the housing needs of Gypsies/Travellers through their Local Housing Strategy.
- Local authorities provide a range of information for the assessment of their housing provision and HNDAs. This may include, for example, the number of Gypsies/Travellers resident in an area, the number of sites/pitches authorities provide and what proportion are in use, and the types of services provided. Combined, this information should provide some indication of how authorities are meeting the housing needs of this group. Evidence may be derived from statistical sources, locally commissioned research or local management data about running sites/pitches and relevant council policies and strategies.

- Scottish Planning Policy states "Given the typically transitory nature of Gypsies and Travellers, provision should be made for those communities which are in an area already and those who may arrive at a later date. Planning authorities should identify suitable locations for meeting the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and set out policies about small privately owned sites. Gypsy and Traveller communities should be involved in decisions about sites for their use."

Social Policy Areas

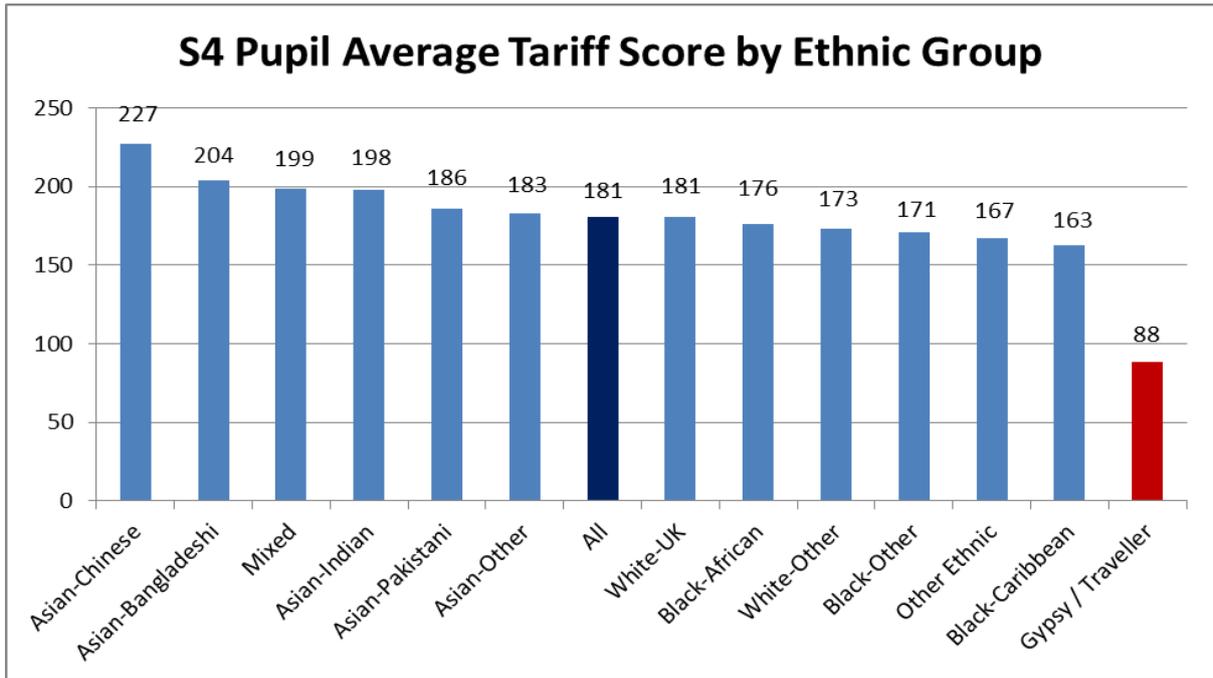
Gypsies/Travellers experience much poorer outcomes than other communities and can have difficulty accessing services which are appropriate for their needs. The following evidence, drawn from administrative data sources where possible, compares Gypsies/Travellers to other ethnic groups and the general population in their life chances and their use of services. The policy areas covered are considered important and relevant to the lives of Gypsies/Travellers.

School Education ⁽¹¹⁾

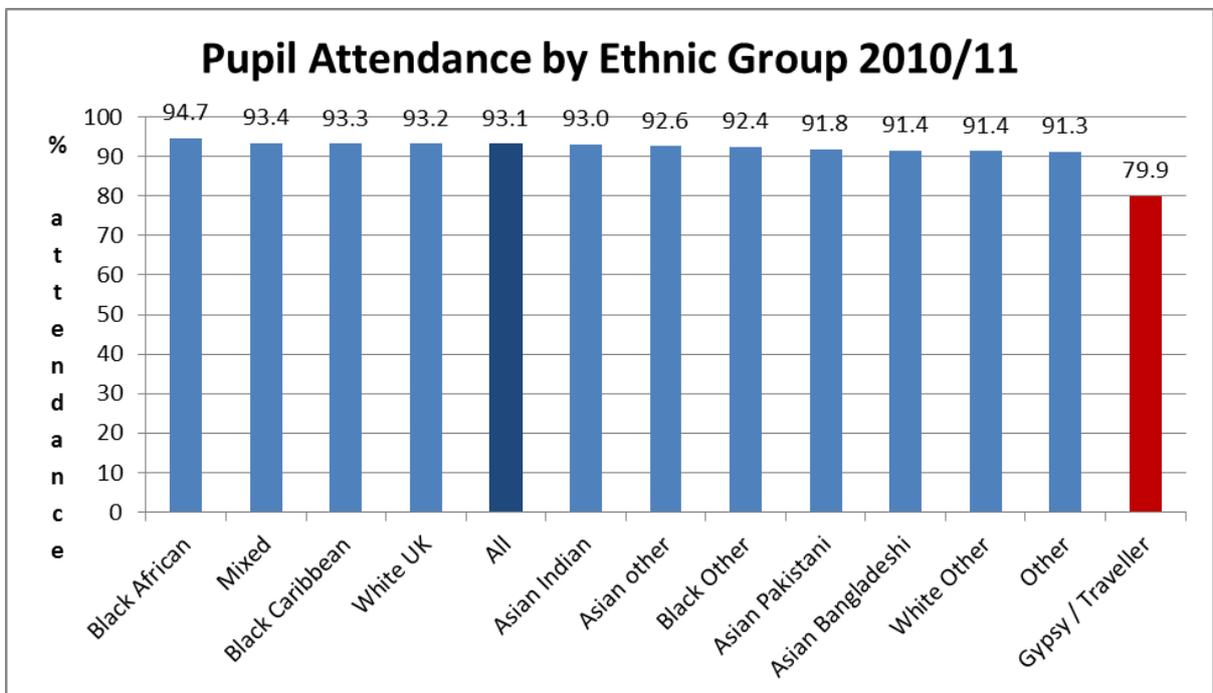
Around 850 school pupils in Scotland identified as 'White: Gypsy/Traveller' in 2012 and this represented around 0.1% of all pupils (the figure has been around 0.1% for several years). Ethnic group is self-declared, either by parents or pupils themselves, and it is likely that the reported figures for Gypsies/Travellers are an undercount - the 2011 Census results could help to indicate whether or not this is the case.

In the Pupil Census, the Ethnic Group categories were changed for 2011 and 2012 to match the 2011 Census. Prior to this there was a threefold breakdown where information was collected on 'Occupational Travellers' and 'Other Travellers' along with 'Gypsies/Travellers' – the information shown on the following charts is derived from these three categories combined.

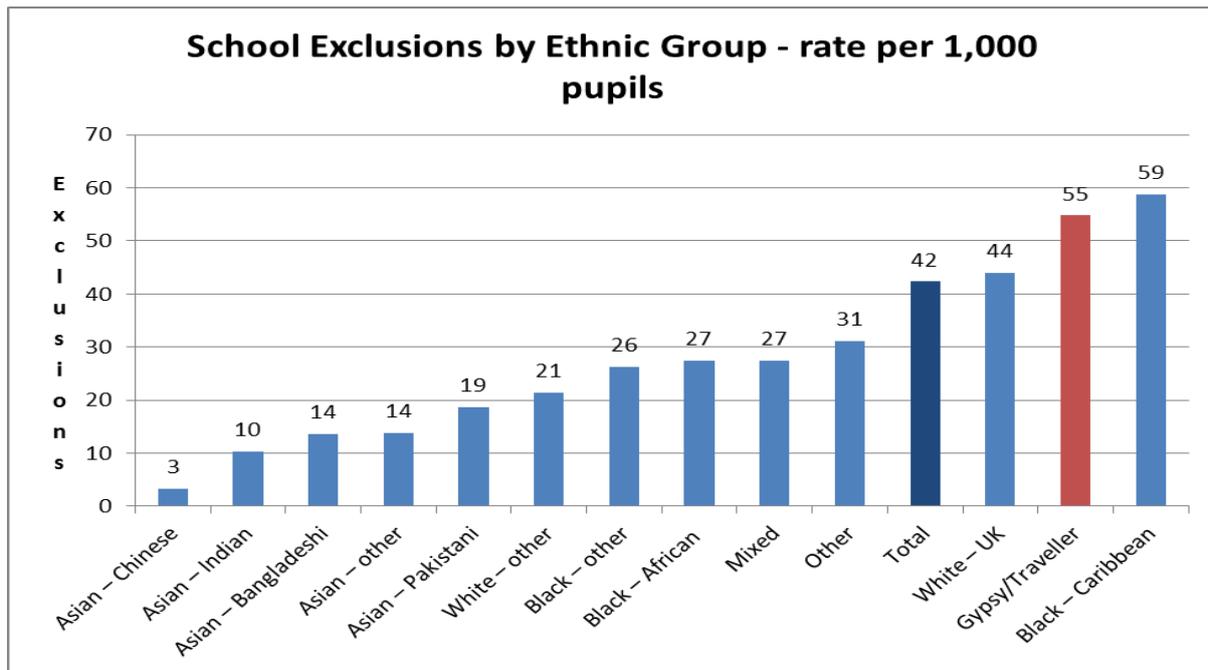
The latest comparable data for S4 pupils (using a three year average 2008/9-2010/11) shows that this group had the lowest attainment scores by a large margin – an average tariff score of 88 compared to the Scotland average of 181.



The latest school attendance figures illustrated on the chart below show that Gypsies/Travellers had the lowest attendance rates of any ethnic group - 79.9% compared to the 93.1% Scotland average. It should be noted however that Local Authorities may mark Gypsy/Traveller children as authorised absent, even when they are on extended leave, in order to keep a place for them on the school roll. This could have an effect on the figures.



Further, the chart below shows that for the latest two years (2009/10 and 2010/11) the Gypsy/Traveller ethnic group had a high rate of school exclusions – 55 exclusions per 1,000 pupils versus the Scotland average of 42.



The above charts indicate that school education is a key area where the performance of Gypsies/Travellers is lower than that of most other ethnic groups.

The UK Government's 2010 report on [Improving the outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils](#)⁽¹²⁾ found that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in England tended to be concentrated in schools with below average results, and that, even when controlling for gender, free school meals, deprivation and special educational needs, they made considerably less progress than their peers. These pupils are thought to face a range of social, cultural, economic and systemic barriers to maximising their experience of school and education.

Health

Statistics from administrative sources on the health of Gypsies/Travellers in Scotland is limited due to incomplete ethnic coding and small numbers of records for the Gypsy/Traveller ethnic group.

Parry et al's 2004 report, [The Health Status of Gypsies & Travellers in England](#)⁽¹³⁾ suggests that Gypsies/Travellers have significantly poorer health than other UK resident English speaking ethnic minorities and economically disadvantaged white UK residents. They are also more likely to suffer from miscarriages, still births, and the death of young babies and older children.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission ([EHRC](#))⁽¹⁴⁾ has estimated that in Britain:

- Life expectancy for Gypsy/Traveller men and women is 10 years lower than the national average;
- Gypsy/Traveller mothers are 20 times more likely than the rest of the population to have experienced the death of a child.

Other sources reveal that Gypsies/Travellers use NHS health services less than other members of the population, with a low rate of registration with a GP and low rates of screening and immunization; ⁽¹⁵⁾

Health records in Scotland have been linked to 2001 Census records to obtain more complete health information by Ethnic Group. However, as 'White - Gypsy/Traveller' was not a separate ethnic group in the 2001 Census, information on this group could not be obtained. Gypsies/Travellers were included as a separate ethnic group in the 2011 Census, so future data linkage work could potentially enhance health statistics for the group.

Crime and Justice

Statistics on Gypsies/Travellers from Crime and Justice administrative sources are limited at present. Whilst some organisations plan to adopt the 2011 Census ethnicity question, which has 'White - Gypsy/Traveller' as a separate ethnic group, others do not have immediate plans to collect such data.

Employment and Welfare

DWP does not have information on benefit claimants who are Gypsies/Travellers as it is not a condition for eligibility for benefit and is not routinely recorded.

The main data source for employment data in Scotland is the Annual Population Survey (APS). However, despite its relatively large sample size, it does not contain enough records on Gypsies/Travellers to be able to obtain meaningful results. As Gypsies/Travellers have been included as a separate ethnic group in the 2011 Census, this source should reveal some new information on economic activity and employment.

[The 2010 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey Attitudes to Discrimination and Positive Action](#) ⁽¹⁶⁾ module concluded that Gypsies/Travellers appear to be the subjects of fairly widespread discriminatory attitudes. This is the case in the context of employment as well as personal relationships, for example:

47% believe that a Gypsy/Traveller would be unsuitable as a primary school teacher. This is much the same as the 48% who held that view in 2006. (Further exploration of this question revealed that people thought Gypsies/Travellers moved around a lot which would make being a primary school teacher particularly challenging.)

4. Emerging Sources

The 2011 Census

The inclusion of Gypsy/Traveller as a separate ethnic group in the 2011 Census should provide important data on the Gypsy/Traveller population as a whole, i.e. housed Gypsies/Travellers as well as those living on Gypsy/Traveller sites.

The latest [Outputs Prospectus](#) ⁽¹⁷⁾ states that the first univariate equalities tables will be published from late September 2013, with more detailed cross tab data following in autumn/winter. Analysis of this data will provide a wealth of information on Gypsies/Travellers including: accommodation type, employment, health and education. The questions asked of all households, including Gypsies/Travellers, can be found on the sample household [questionnaire](#) ⁽¹⁸⁾.

It should be noted that the quality of this data depends on respondents who are Gypsies/Travellers, and completing the questionnaire, self-identifying themselves as this ethnic group.

The [Analysis of Ethnicity in the 2001 Census - Summary Report](#) ⁽¹⁹⁾ provides a flavour of what will be possible from the 2011 Census. The main topic areas for census analysis include:

- Demographics
- Housing
- Labour Market
- Health and Care
- Education
- Religion

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) now has regulatory responsibility for local authorities and social landlords who manage Gypsy/Traveller sites and there is now a Scottish Social Housing [Charter Outcome](#) relating specifically to Gypsies/Travellers: **Sites are well maintained and managed**. Site satisfaction data will be collected for the first time by the SHR in 2014, along with data on average weekly rent per pitch and total number of pitches.

5. The Twice Yearly Count

From 1998-2009 the Scottish Government managed a twice yearly count ⁽⁴⁾ of the Gypsy/Traveller population living on official Council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) sites, private sites and caravans found on unauthorised encampments. The key objective of the Count was to improve understanding of the Gypsy/Traveller population to inform policy and strategy development. It has been acknowledged that the Count was more an estimate of households based on a count of occupied pitches/trailers than an estimate of the Gypsy/Traveller population. The Count did not include housed Gypsies/Travellers, or other traveller populations such as New (Age) Travellers or Occupational Travellers /Travelling Showpeople, and the information could not be used directly as a basis for accommodation needs assessment, particularly since the needs of Gypsies/Travellers living in housing were not considered. The count did not collect information on how well local providers were meeting the needs of Gypsies/Travellers across a range of services such as housing, health and education.

Further to the 2009 count, local authorities were asked by the Scottish Government to provide an updated count for 2010 to 2012; however data was received from

around only half of those with sites, meaning that it has not yet been possible to update the national figures.

In 2012 the Scottish Government’s housing statisticians reviewed their full range of statistical products against a backdrop of shrinking internal resources. This review sought to prioritise their statistical housing collections, making efficiency savings where appropriate and aligning workloads with the new staffing levels in the teams. As part of this review, internal and external stakeholders were asked their views on the Gypsy/Traveller count and invited to consider the possibility of the count being discontinued, in favour of utilising other information sources such as those detailed earlier in this paper.

There was a mixed response to this consultation. From a Scottish Government policy perspective centrally collected figures had only been of partial benefit and used to inform very low levels of SG funding. Some councils considered it a time consuming process whereas others reported that it helped with HNDAs, allowing them plan more effectively by looking across local borders.

6. Data Gaps and Future Data Collection

Data Gaps

There are a number data gaps on the Gypsies/Travellers evidence base. The following table summarises the main gaps and suggests how these could be filled:

Information Gap	How gap could be filled
Gypsy/Traveller population in Scotland	Census 2011
Age and gender profiles of the G/T population	Census 2011
Family Structures and numbers of dependent G/T children	Census 2011
Numbers of G/Ts living in settled housing	Census 2011
Accommodation Type	Census 2011
Tenure	Census 2011
Occupancy Rating	Census 2011
Economic Activity and Employment	Census 2011
General Health	Census 2011
Disability	Census 2011
Highest Level of Qualification	Census 2011
Religion	Census 2011
No. of Sites and Pitches (social housing only)	Scottish Housing Regulator data
Average weekly rent (social housing only)	Scottish Housing Regulator data
Site Satisfaction Data (social housing only)	Scottish Housing Regulator data
Health data e.g. outpatient and inpatient statistics, maternity statistics, waiting times, access to GPs, drug and alcohol statistics.	More complete coding of latest ethnicity field across administrative health data (SMR) sources. Data Linkage projects.
Crime and Justice data e.g. police data, prisons data, Scottish Court Service data, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service data.	Use of latest ethnicity field across administrative Crime and Justice data sources. Data Linkage projects.

Future Data Collection

The Scottish Government's Communities Analytical Services team (CAS) plan to analyse emerging data on Gypsies/Travellers, particularly that from the 2011 Census, and make this evidence available on the [Equality Evidence Finder](#) ⁽²⁰⁾ later this year.

This new information will be considered alongside the existing evidence base to determine what evidence gaps still exist. An assessment will be made on the importance of these gaps and this work will inform decisions concerning any future data collection on Gypsies/Travellers.

Timeline

The following sets out a timeline towards possible future data collection:

Late 2013 – CAS to produce a new analysis paper on the Gypsy/Traveller data from the 2011 Census. This will expand on, and fill gaps in, many of the policy themes covered in this evidence paper. Following the analysis of Census data there will be a fuller body of evidence on which to make decisions on new data collection moving forward.

Early 2014 – CAS to set out options on future data collection, considering the scale, frequency and feasibility of each option, alongside costs and burden. This work should lead to a decision on the shape and scope of any new national data collection.

Spring 2014 – CAS to pilot new style collection (if applicable).

Summer 2014 – CAS to carry out live collection (if applicable).

**Scottish Government
Communities Analytical Services (CAS)
Scottish Government
August 2013**

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