

Definitions

Legal definition of Gypsies and Travellers and context

Race Relations Case Law recognises English Romany Gypsies, and Irish Travellers as ethnic minorities. These do not include New Age Travellers.

English Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers have the same rights to race relations protection as other recognised ethnic minority groups, but most rights are available to all under the [Human Rights Act 1988](#)

Public bodies have a legal duty to promote equality and racial harmony between these groups and others in everything they do, including decision making.

Public bodies must also look to Human Rights legislation. This does not mean that Gypsies and Travellers receive special treatment - rather their needs should be balanced against those of the settled community.

Planning guidance definition

The planning guidance definition is different to the legal definition of Gypsies and Travellers, and is used for planning purposes:

- **"gypsies and travellers" means:**
Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such.

Note the use of lower case 'g' and 't' for gypsies and travellers. In this definition it refers to a wider group than just those who belong to the ethnic groups mentioned in the legal definition.

Housing Act 2004 definition

The Housing Act (2004) definition is used for assessing accommodation needs - not just those in caravans

- **"gypsies and travellers" means:**
persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan; and all other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including:
 - (i) such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently; and
 - (ii) members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).