



**COVID-19 Response Planning
Supporting Gypsy/Traveller Communities**

**A framework to support local authorities and their partners
in local decision making**

What is the purpose of this document?

To provide a framework for supporting Gypsy/Traveller communities living on public and private sites, and in unauthorised encampments in Scottish local authorities during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The guidance may also support other mobile communities, however, there are additional considerations for Gypsy/Travellers based on the cultural background.

Who should read it?

- Those involved in local resilience partnerships
- Local Authority staff including Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officers, Site Managers and those providing temporary accommodation
- NHS Directors of Public Health and IJB Chief Officers
- Police Scotland
- Anyone who is involved in planning and providing support to Gypsy Travellers during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Key messages

- Gypsy/Travellers face additional risks during the COVID-19 crisis. Their accommodation may make it difficult for them to limit virus spread and comply with guidelines.
- During the virus outbreak Gypsy/Travellers should stay in their settled home or camp in places where they can access sanitation, services and healthcare.
- Local authorities and their partners should provide appropriate support to help them to follow stay at home advice and public health guidelines.
- Gypsy/Travellers are more likely to have pre-existing health conditions and be at increased risk of poverty, fuel poverty, food insecurity etc. so it is important that they are linked to wider local support and services during the shutdown.

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COVID-19 Response Planning: Supporting Gypsy/Traveller Communities

1. Background and Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the document

This document provides a framework to assist local authorities and their partners, including the NHS and the third sector, in decision making in their local response to COVID-19 in relation to Gypsy/Travellers. It sets out the policy basis and other considerations for providing support to Gypsy/Traveller communities. The principles that underpin our recommended approach to Gypsy/Travellers flow from the [joint Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan, Improving the Lives of Gypsy/Travellers 2019-21](#), which has the full support of the Scottish Government and all 32 local authorities. It is also in line with the national guidance on managing unauthorised encampments: [Managing Unauthorised Camping by Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland: Guidance for Local Authorities](#).

This work is a core part of the Scottish Government's public health response to COVID-19 as it aims to protect the health of individual people in marginalised groups and to support the public health measures designed to prevent the spread of the virus.

The framework has been produced by COSLA and the Scottish Government with support from NHS Health Scotland, third sector partners and community representatives. It draws on emerging evidence and resources available to support local authorities during the planning and delivery of support to 'at risk' groups.

Local authorities should draw on the advice of their Chief Social Work Officers, Heads of Housing, Joint Board Chief Officers, equalities officers, internal resilience teams, and NHS Directors of Public Health as well as referring to up to date public health advice on NHS inform. They will also want to ensure that their response to Gypsy/Travellers takes full advantage of various other means of support being developed and delivered both nationally and locally in response to COVID-19. For example the £350m Community Support package made up of different funding streams which are designed to provide essential assistance in local areas.

It is anticipated that any local issues relating to support for Gypsy/Travellers which require multi-agency input will be discussed by Local Resilience Partnerships in the first instance and escalated as necessary.

We are aware that, as local authorities and partners plan their response to the COVID-19 outbreak, challenges may arise in ensuring services and support reach all individuals in your local areas, and that there will be specific complexities in seeking to meet the needs of vulnerable Gypsy/Traveller communities. This framework is therefore intended to support local authorities and their partners in this regard.

1.2 Leadership and Strategic Direction

On Friday 21 March 2020, COSLA Group Leaders unanimously agreed that Gypsy/Travellers living roadside should be supported during this period, to support Gypsy/Travellers including with access to basic sanitation and services – toilets, water, bins and wash facilities. This is in line with existing national guidance on managing unauthorised encampments and would put into practice Leaders' wider commitments to support Gypsy/Travellers

This position, and the work of Local Government and partners to implement it, will help to ensure that public health and poverty mitigation measures in place to address the COVID-19 outbreak are accessible to everyone in Scotland. Whilst the provision of support and local resilience planning is a local decision, there is clear political agreement that the response to COVID-19 will not discriminate, and will include minority ethnic communities who face additional vulnerabilities.

The Scottish Government's announcement of a £350m community support package should help local partners to assist communities at highest risk – both in terms of complying with public health guidance, and poverty mitigation and other resilience measures. This funding package includes a £50m Hardship Fund and a £30m Food Fund, provided directly to Local Authorities to support local resilience, and intended to support the types of interventions outlined in this guidance.

1.3 Feedback and Review

The framework will be reviewed regularly and updated periodically to reflect any significant changes in public health advice. It should apply, as a minimum, for the duration of time that UK and Scottish Government public health guidance advises people to practice social distancing and social isolation.

In order to maintain an up to date picture of provision that is in place for Gypsy/Travellers during this period, and to identify any potential gaps in support or issues with the Framework, local authorities are asked to provide regular updates on what is happening in their area to dominique@cosla.gov.uk. These can be fed in via regular Gypsy/Traveller Site manager phone calls hosted by COSLA.

If other's have comments on the framework or its operation, please email Robbie.Lambie@gov.scot.

1.4 Policy Context - Why Gypsy Travellers are at Increased Risk and Need Additional Support

Gypsy/Travellers face some specific additional risks and vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 crisis that are important to consider within local resilience plans and which may make it difficult for them to limit virus spread and comply with public health guidelines. These include:

- Overcrowding in trailers, and between trailers, and – for those on sites – sharing of toilets, washing and kitchen facilities;
- Limited or no access to additional trailer for purpose of self-isolation;
- For those living roadside, reliance on toilet/washing facilities, for example in leisure centres and retail parks, some of which will now be closed;
- Hostile attitudes from settled communities towards encampments, causing people to move from place to place, which in contrary to Scottish Government and NHS Scotland guidelines;
- Difficulties keeping up to date on changing public health messages, due to literacy or digital exclusion issues as well as fear of engagement with authorities and challenges in registering with GPs; and
- A higher number of underlying health conditions, potentially resulting in more serious illness.

The community faces additional risks and vulnerabilities including racism and discrimination, poverty and barriers to accessing mainstream services. They are likely to be more severely affected by the restrictions that we are all subject to. Community members are:

- more often self-employed workers, often in lower paid trades. They therefore face significant financial insecurity and risks as a result of loss of income if unable to work. They may also have less experience in claiming benefits;
- understood to have higher risks of poor mental health and suicide. They may struggle to maintain their health and wellbeing if they are living in houses and will be unable to travel and exercise their nomadic lifestyle during this period;
- more likely to face exclusions to educational services and support, for example if children have been inconsistently attending and/or if they lack digital access on sites;
- more likely to be unbanked and therefore be reliant on cash, which some shops are moving away from;
- less likely to have food storage facilities – or the financial resources - to be able to stock up and are therefore affected by issues associated with panic buying and empty shops; and
- much more likely to be fuel poor and be in need of regular card top ups or access to gas or liquid fuel,

The combined impact of all of these factors is a risk of extreme poverty, which will be exacerbated by the need to self-isolate, socially distance and shield (see NHS Inform for more details).

Whilst people living on public sector sites will typically be connected to support via their Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officers, site managers or other Local Authority or health and social care officers, this may not be the case for those living on private sites, or for those living roadside or in houses. We know that many Gypsy/Travellers may not know how to access support, and struggle to access benefits, including Universal Credit, and the Scottish Welfare Fund as well as wider services which identify and assist vulnerable groups.

2. Framework to support local authorities and their partners in local decision making

2.1 Accommodation Provision

Supporting Gypsy/Travellers to access suitable accommodation and to have safe and secure places to stay during this period will be an important part of local resilience plans. Different approaches will be necessary to meet these needs, depending on local circumstances. Key principles to guide decision making are set out in the paragraphs below.

2.2 Encouraging Stability – A Presumption Against Evictions

During the virus outbreak we are keen to encourage people to settle in places where they can access sanitation, services and healthcare and to discourage travelling. This will help local authorities and other statutory services, including the NHS, to provide help when needed and reduce the spread of the virus. Gypsy/Traveller families are likely to want to visit family members they are worried about, travel because of the time or year or possibly attend funerals. Where this is the case, they should be asked to return to their settled home and follow up to date advice on staying at home.

Roadside encampments: In terms of roadside encampments of Gypsy/Travellers who do not have a settled home:

- Local Authorities should only consider eviction or dispersing a camp where the location of an encampment is unsuitable for health or safety reasons. In this case, an alternative, suitable location should be identified; and
- Local Authorities should seek to work with private landowners to avoid eviction or harassment if at all possible.

People who fall ill: No-one should be asked to leave a site or camp because someone in the family has fallen ill.

People living on public sector sites: The emergency Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill was passed on Wednesday 1 April and will come into force as soon as possible in April. The Bill includes measures on evictions to protect tenants confined to their homes. The Minimum Standards on Gypsy Traveller Accommodation set out the rights and responsibilities for occupancy agreements on public sector Gypsy/Traveller sites, including guidelines for ending a tenancy. Social Landlords

should extend the same protection to Gypsy/Travellers sites as to tenants in social housing during the outbreak.

2.3 Supporting Gypsy/Travellers not to travel - negotiated stopping or/ managing unauthorised encampments

Some families or individuals may be living roadside and not have a settled home to return to during this period. As a result of widespread business closures, they are likely to require assistance. Local Authority staff working with Gypsy/Travellers will be familiar with [existing guidance on managing unauthorised encampments](#).

Example of a current Local Authority approach:

Roadside encampments will be offered a temporary pitch on the official Local Authority site.

The key stages are:

- An initial site visit to speak to the residents, assess the situation and identify needs, making reference to the range of possible support listed at 2.13 below;
- A decision on the most appropriate, proportionate response to keep the people in the camp and the wider community safe, for example, recommending that the people at the camp return to and stay in their settled home, supporting the encampment where it is, or identifying an alternative location/space on permanent site; and
- An agreement with the camp members on the best way forward and provision of appropriate services.

2.4 Additional requirements for unauthorised encampments during the COVID-19 outbreak

It is vital that you provide effective management of unauthorised encampments in order to help Gypsy/Travellers protect themselves from the virus and to limit travelling:

- If possible, encampments should be provided with:
 - sanitation, in the form of additional toilets and washing facilities to allow families to self-isolate within a caravan and limit sharing of facilities and therefore risk spreading the virus; and
 - Bins and regular collections, to allow for safe disposal of waste. Advice should be provided on safe waste disposal in cases where someone is showing symptoms – i.e. double bagging personal waste and waiting 72 hours before putting out for collection. People may need extra bins to make this feasible in a roadside setting.
- There should be sufficient space between pitches to allow families to self-isolate and socially distance effectively and to meet the requirements of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005. The benchmark distance for fire safety is 6m between caravans;

- Health information about the virus should be shared widely, including information for anyone who may fall under the arrangements for shielding those with very high risk pre-existing health conditions (see sections 2.9 and 2.10);
- Local Authorities may wish to issue information on any changes to behaviours on the site during the outbreak, e.g. on use of shared facilities. In addition, they should consider supporting conversations with anyone who has the virus, to allow sharing of information, which, may reduce suspicion of others;
- As part of resilience planning, Local Authorities should identify suitable land for encampments and/or to support self-isolation, social distancing and shielding. If appropriate, this can be done on a regional basis, with Local Authorities working together to identify appropriate locations;
- If Local Authorities cannot identify land that they own but have identified suitable land in public or private ownership, including uninhabited holiday sites, they could consider paying for the use of land using their allocation of the Hardship Fund. Holiday caravan sites have been asked to close to prevent tourism but emergency regulations, The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, allow them to remain open if requested to do so by a Local Authority; and
- If a Local Authority thinks that the Scottish Government can support the identification of appropriate land, please contact Dorothy.ogle@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

Example of a current Local Authority approach:

A piece of land has been identified and secured for sole purpose of any roadside encampment requiring to self-isolate.

2.5 Support for Gypsy/Travellers living in public sector sites

Local Authority sites typically have one amenity block (for toilet, washing and cooking) per pitch, but that pitch may be occupied by two or more trailers. To minimise the spread of the virus within and between family groups the Local Authority should consider:

- offering additional toilets or spread families across pitches so that there are separate facilities for each trailer;
- Making cleaning products accessible for users so that any shared bathrooms are kept clean. Any shared bathrooms should be cleaned using standard household detergent and disinfectant active against viruses and bacteria. If being used by someone who is symptomatic, the bathroom should be cleaned after each use. Particular attention should be paid to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles. An apron and gloves should be considered whilst cleaning depending on the levels of contamination. Ensure good hand hygiene is carried out after cleaning.
- Ensuring that there is access to fuel supplies: Local authorities should consider whether they are able to suspend charging for fuel during the

Example of a current Local Authority approach:

“Gloves have been provided to people for use when accessing water from a shared stand pipe, to minimise contamination.”

outbreak by over-riding metering on sites. Overriding metering could reduce infection spread, ensure continuity of supply if site managers are absent and reduce fuel poverty.

- Alternatively, fuel cards may be provided, for example where individual pitches have their own supplier. This measure will have a significant effect in mitigating financial hardship for a group at high risk; and
- Local authorities should also consider whether they can provide support to arrange bulk delivery of gas canisters for heating trailers and cooking during the shutdown if there are shortages or difficulties in accessing these.

2.6 Support for Gypsy/Travellers living on private sites

Some private Gypsy/Traveller sites operate on a private rental basis, with different families renting a pitch directly from a private landlord, who may or may not live on the site. Other private sites are occupied by a family group who own the land themselves.

While local authorities will have variable knowledge of/contact with private sites in their area, they should be offering support as there are likely to be people at high risk living on private sites, who may be less well connected with the information and services they need to keep themselves safe and well, and to cope if they become ill. Local Authorities may be able to identify private Gypsy/Traveller sites in their area by checking with Planning colleagues on whether they are generally aware of sites or can provide information that's readily available on current planning permissions.

The accommodation and washing facilities on these sites will differ greatly but there may be a need for additional washing facilities to enable people to self-isolate, socially distance and shield, and local authorities should consider whether the offer of additional sanitation should be extended to private sites.

2.7 Support for self-isolation, social distancing and shielding on sites or in camps

If someone on a site or camp becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they need to follow public health advice to stay at home and self-isolate. Household members will also need to follow public health advice in case they have contracted the virus. See section 2.10 on health advice. By household we mean members of the family who live and eat together. Due to the confined living conditions on Gypsy/Traveller camps, they will need support to do this.

- Gypsy/Travellers cannot self-isolate while they are travelling so families should be supported to stay in one place, either returning to their settled home or establishing a camp;
- It may be necessary to provide individuals and their household members with separate accommodation or housing if someone shows symptoms of COVID-19. Local authorities should identify local accommodation solutions which are culturally appropriate if feasible, for example an additional trailer on a site if it is large enough or a place on a holiday site. Links can be made to similar services being provided by homelessness services and Rapid Re-housing

Transition Plans. This issue is covered from a homelessness perspective in Health Protection Scotland's guidance for [non-healthcare settings](#)

- Where possible, local authorities should allow residents to move onto unoccupied pitches where this allows caravans to be more spaced out;
- Some smaller camps may wish to reduce risk by significantly limiting who and what comes on to the camp. If residents wish to take this approach as a camp, local authorities should consider how they can provide any support to access food, medication and other essentials;
- If a separate bathroom is not available, advice should be given on drawing up a rota for washing or bathing, with the person who is unwell using the facilities last, before thoroughly cleaning the bathroom themselves, using standard household detergent and disinfectant active against viruses and bacteria. (if they are able or it is appropriate);
- In light of the confined nature of chalets, campervans and caravans, an outdoor space which people self-isolating can access without coming into contact with others, should be identified wherever possible. Spacing out residents on sites where there are vacant pitches would help with this.

Example of a current Local Authority approach:

Holding a number of empty pitches on official Local Authority site vacant to allow current residents to shift across the site to enable self-isolation in recognition of vulnerable, high risk residents

2.8 Scottish Government Support – provision of toilet and washing facilities

Where local authorities have contracts with suppliers of mobile toilets and washing facilities for Gypsy/Travellers (for example where they already provide them on temporary camps) they can draw on these contracts.

The Scottish Government is exploring a national contract for toilets and washing facilities which Local Authorities may be able to call on if they cannot make provision themselves. Scottish Government and COSLA will work with regional resilience partnerships to examine this and wider needs for temporary encampments. Scottish Government will provide an update on the contract when information is available but, if you have questions in the meantime, please contact Kerri.Ramsay@gov.scot.

2.9 Shielding from COVID-19

Shielding is for people, including children, who are at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19. People at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should strictly follow shielding measures. People in this higher risk group include:

- those who have had an organ transplant and remain on ongoing immunosuppression medication;
- those with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- those with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia who are at any stage of treatment;

- those with severe chest conditions such as cystic fibrosis or severe asthma (requiring hospital admissions or courses of steroid tablets);
- those with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections such as SCID and homozygous sickle cell;
- those with severe diseases of body systems, such as severe kidney disease (dialysis); and
- those who are pregnant with significant heart disease (congenital or acquired)

NHS Scotland will be directly contacting people with these conditions to provide further advice and some Gypsy/Travellers living on sites will have been contacted already. Plans are being made for a wide range of help and support to allow people to stay at home and be shielded from the virus. There are particular rules people need to follow to keep themselves safe. Further information on shielding is available on the NHS Inform website. <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-shielding>

It is therefore important that Gypsy/Travelers register with a local GP practice and ensure their GP has their up to date contact details. For more information if people have difficulties with this, please contact kate.burton@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk.

Housing may need to be offered as a temporary accommodation option in order for a person to be shielded. If appropriate, a culturally appropriate offer should be made, for example in a trailer.

Shielding is for the protection of the individual, it is their choice to decide whether to follow the measures.

2.10 Public Health Information - information that should be provided to Gypsy/Travellers on public and private sites and unauthorised encampments

Local Authority officers will have a crucial role in ensuring that Gypsy/Travellers can receive accessible and up to date public health information when they are supporting site residents and roadside encampments. Up to date information and guidance about COVID-19 from NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government should be shared widely including advice on:

Restrictions on movement – staying at home and away from others	www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others-social-distancing/
Hand washing and how to protect yourself	www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-general-advice
Social distancing	www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-social-distancing

Shielding information	www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-shielding
What to do if someone has Covid-19 – preventing infection	www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-infection
A communications toolkit including alternative formats easy read, posters and other communications can be found on NHS Inform	www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/communications-toolkits-and-leaflets/coronavirus-covid-19-communications-toolkits-and-leaflets
Further detailed advice on specific situations such as advice for parents and advice for people with specific health conditions is also available at NHS Inform	www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19

For further advice on what information to provide, please contact kate.burton@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk.

Hospital visiting

In order to reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19 and to shield vulnerable groups, NHS Boards are now being asked to restrict hospital visiting to essential visits only.

The following visits are considered to be essential:

- A birth partner during childbirth
- For a person receiving end-of-life care
- to support someone with a mental health issue such as dementia, a learning disability or autism where not being present would cause the patient to be distressed
- to accompany a child in hospital.

Visitors should also consider whether a visit is essential even in these circumstances. Anyone who is unwell and/or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 - a new, persistent cough and fever or high temperature - should NOT visit any patients in a hospital.

Non-essential visitors should be encouraged to consider alternative ways of maintaining contact with relatives and loved ones in hospital, such as by phone.

2.11 Gypsy/Traveller COVID-19 Facebook Page

COSLA and the Scottish Government are working closely with NHS Health Scotland, Article 12, Mecopp, STEP and Progress in Dialogue to establish a [moderated COVID-19 Facebook page for Gypsy/Travellers](#).

It would be helpful if the Facebook page is promoted as a source of up to date information as well as a way of gathering feedback about issues and difficulties the community is facing. This may also be a route for communicating with Gypsy/Travellers in a specific area or region. If you would like to use the page please contact Dominique@COSLA.gov.uk.

2.12 What to do if someone dies

A Gypsy/Traveller death is mourned by the whole community. It is traditional for families is to dress and care for the deceased. If someone dies from COVID-19 on a site or in a camp, the Local Authority should tell the family about the steps that they should take to keep themselves safe if they decide to care for their loved one. The Scottish Government has published [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on preparation for burial or cremation for religious organisations, faith and cultural groups](#). It includes advice that, since there is a small but real risk of transmission from the body of the deceased, the advice is that mourners should not take part in any rituals or practices that bring them into close contact with the body of an individual who has died from, or with symptoms of, coronavirus (COVID-19) for the duration of the pandemic. Given the very significant risk for vulnerable and extremely vulnerable people who come into contact with the virus, it is strongly advised that they have no contact with the body. This includes washing, preparing or dressing the body.

Restrictions are also now in place so that only immediate family members can be physically present at funerals (whether or not the death was due to COVID-19). This message has been communicated to faith groups, funeral directors. These restrictions are likely to be particularly difficult for Gypsy/Travellers who traditionally have large attendance at funerals. Information about the restrictions should be communicated very sensitively.

2.13 Food, fuel and wider assistance

All aspects of local resilience plan will need to take account of the needs of Gypsy/Travellers, in for example in relation to support for people at risk of poverty and services for children and families as well as the provision of health and social care.

- **Finances** - Gypsy/Travellers may need additional support or advice to help them to access any benefits they are entitled to or other forms of financial relief provided by either the UK or Scottish Government, as well as local support such as the Scottish Welfare Fund, investment in which has been more than doubled, to provide additional support to those who need crisis support in the short term. MECOPP Gypsy/Traveller Carers' Project can

assist community members with advice and information, applications for welfare benefits and other hardship funds as well as making referrals to foodbanks and other sources of community assistance. As this service will be available in different parts of Scotland, in the first instance, please contact suzanne@mecopp.org.uk or 07957 652 413 and you will be directed to the appropriate worker. Please note that this service will only be in operation for 28 hours per week;

- **Food** - It is important that local authorities make sure that local responses to addressing food insecurity includes Gypsy/Travellers, who may not be engaged with local facilities, such as food banks and replacement free school meal provision. The Scottish Government has put a £70 million Food Fund in place to support those who would otherwise be unable to access food through the usual routes. £30m of the Food Fund is initially being made available to local authorities for structured public sector responses, working with local resilience partnerships to support households who may experience barriers in accessing food. This will be kept under review to ascertain whether additional resource is required. Up to £30m has been set aside for a nationally procured programme to deliver food for those who are unable to leave their homes due to being at highest clinical risk, known as the shielded group. £10 million has been set aside for investment in third sector organisations that are responding to food insecurity both at a national and local level. COSLA Group Leaders agreed distribution of the funding on 03 April 2020. [Guidance for local authorities is now available.](#) It sets out principles for utilising the fund. It also highlights that local partners may use resource from their Food Fund allocation to support households that are marginalised, which includes Gypsy/Travellers, noting that community organisations that already provide support to people in this category may be well placed to provide this as part of a coordinated approach.
- Households may need help to store supplies that they may need for their self-isolate, social distance or shield, if there is not enough space to store these within their home, for example space for a locked box; and
- **Fuel** - Gypsy/Travellers are at high risk of fuel poverty and may struggle to top up electricity metres during this period. Consideration should be given to the Local Authority meeting their electricity costs for a period of time, or providing pre-paid electricity cards. Home Energy Scotland can also provide support to residents struggling with their fuel bills. They offer free and impartial advice, funded by the Scottish Government, and they have the latest information from energy suppliers and the government. If any residents are struggling, please encourage them to call free on 0808 808 2282 or visit homeenergyscotland.org for help.
- **Domestic Abuse** - Responding to domestic abuse continues to be a priority, and anyone experiencing it should access support without

Example of a current Local Authority approach:

Electricity meters have been bypassed in recognition of facilities providing top up being closed and the potential of site managers being unable to visit the site. This also limits the need for residents to leave the site and recognises the current increase in financial hardship.

delay. Scotland's National Domestic Abuse Helpline is available 24/7/365 - 0800 027 1234 – and web and email services can be accessed at <https://sdafmh.org.uk/contact-us/>. Women and children experiencing domestic abuse can be signposted to local services.

- **Education** – Education – Scottish Travellers Education Programme (STEP) It is important that Local Authority education staff maintain contact with Gypsy/Traveller children and families. [STEP](#) families website contains interactive stories, activities and information for families while shielding at home as well as guidance for staff to support learning at a distance.
- **Young Gypsy/Travellers** - Article 12 works with Young Gypsy/Travellers <https://www.article12.org/>

2.14 Keeping staff safe

Staff working on sites should follow the advice from Health Protection Scotland on working in non-healthcare settings available at: <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/>

Useful links:

- **COSLA's Migration Scotland Website:**
<http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/covid-19>
- Facebook page set up by public and third sector partners to support Gypsy/Travellers:
<https://www.facebook.com/GypsyTravellersScotlandCoronavirusinformation-100442048272006/>
- **COVID-19 Advice from Friends, Families and Travellers:**
<http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/covid-19-guidance-for-supporting-people-living-on-traveller-sites-unauthorised-encampments-and-canal-boats/>

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