



**Norfolk** County Council  
at your service

## **Equality impact assessment**

### **Joint Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Strategy 2012-14.**

#### **Key findings:**

The Gypsy and Traveller Strategy has been developed jointly between Norfolk and Suffolk partners, as they have merged resources making services for Gypsies and Travellers more efficient. It will continue to support Gypsies and Travellers by providing a partnership delivery framework.

The strategy is in two parts, a position statement outlining services already offered to the Gypsy and Traveller community and an action plan with time specific delivery dates. The position statement includes demographics across the two counties and current legislation steering how we address areas such as accommodation need.

Actions within the strategy were developed following a partnership conference (attended by representatives from the Gypsy and Traveller community) in 2012. The conference highlighted areas for improvement and delivery with regards to the need, supply and gaps in services related to Gypsies and Travellers across the two counties.

The action plan within the Strategy will guide the focus and aims of each subgroup for the main Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group. The Strategy's priority areas, agreed by partners and the Gypsy and Traveller community are divided into three themes in the action plan: Accommodation, Community Cohesion, Education, Health and Wellbeing.

**Directorate:** ETD

**Review officer/s:** Include here everyone who participated in the assessment.  
Keren Wright  
Neil Howard  
Jon Blunkell

**Date completed:** 11/09/12

**Action required:** **YES/NO**

## 1. Overview of activity or proposal

Summarise the overall aims of the activity or proposal, & how will it achieve them:

The Strategy will support Gypsies and Travellers by providing a framework for:

- Improving community cohesion by promoting good relations between Gypsies and Travellers and settled communities
- Increasing awareness and understanding of Gypsy and Traveller needs, culture and lifestyle
- Managing unauthorised encampments in Norfolk and Suffolk, helping to ensure that accommodation needs and other welfare issues are addressed
- Further generating knowledge and understanding of hate crime and incidents and encourage Gypsy and Traveller communities to report them
- Working to reduce and eliminate harassment and discrimination towards Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Improving fire safety and personal welfare for Gypsies and Travellers in Norfolk and Suffolk
- Improving access to learning for pre-school children, young people and adults on Gypsy and Traveller sites and encampments
- Reduce health inequalities, improve health and wellbeing, and promote health education and awareness amongst Gypsies and Travellers

The main Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller steering group has accommodation, health & education and cohesion subgroups in each county. The subgroups are facilitated by the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Team. Partners and representatives from the Gypsy and Traveller community within the subgroups will address the actions contained in the strategy over a two year period.

## 2. Who is affected?

Where this proposal may be relevant to people with a protected characteristic (i.e. they might potentially use the service as a Norfolk resident or visitor) please indicate here:

**Age** (people of different age groups; older & younger etc) YES/NO

**Disability** (people who are wheelchair or cane users; blind, deaf, visually or hearing impaired; can't stand for a long time; have a long-term illness i.e. HIV or a neurological condition such as dyslexia; learning difficulties; mental health etc) YES/NO

**Gender reassignment** (people who identify as transgender) YES/NO

**Marriage/civil partnerships** YES/NO

**Pregnancy & Maternity** YES/NO

**Race** (different ethnic groups, including Gypsies & Travellers) YES/NO

**Religion/belief** (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief) YES/NO

**Sex** (i.e. men/women) YES/NO

**Sexual orientation** (all, including lesbian, gay & bisexual people)

**YES/NO**

**(Please see Appendix 1 for information on types of discrimination)**

### **3. Context to the proposal**

Provide any relevant background information to the proposal, such as:

The profile of people using the service, with a demographic breakdown of disability, ethnicity, gender, age etc;

Any statutory requirements placed on the Local Authority in relation to this area

Anything you consider relevant that will add to the evidence-base, and put the proposal and its potential impact or outcome in context.

In July 2011 the Communities and Local Government Caravan Count showed there were approximately 380 caravans in Suffolk and 477 caravans in Norfolk, the total for both counties therefore being 857. If we assume the accepted average of 2.9 persons per caravan we can estimate the total number of Gypsies and Travellers at approximately 2485 for the two counties combined. These figures include representation from the diverse range of Gypsies and Travellers such as English, Welsh and Scottish Gypsies, New and Irish Travellers. These figures do not include a large number of Gypsies and Travellers that live in houses. It is thought that 50% of Gypsies and Travellers now live in houses.

The Council has a duty to promote good race relations, equality of opportunity and community cohesion in all of their policies and practices. This duty covers all racial groups, including Gypsies and Irish Travellers who are recognised ethnic groups. Planning, site provision and enforcement activity are highly relevant to this duty, because they impact on race relations generally and on the way in which services are delivered to this group. In developing policy and making decisions, authorities need to ensure that their actions are consistent with this general duty. The Equality Act 2010 is the primary legislation which deals with discrimination and aims to achieve equal opportunities in the workplace and in wider society.

The strategy is primarily a partnership document aimed at improving delivery of services to the Gypsy and Traveller community. However, it is recognised that the approach also needs to be leaning towards a person-centred focus, ensuring we work closely with community members to help them to steer their own path towards inclusion and access to services. Having representation at the subgroups from the community will strengthen the person-centred approach encouraging independence towards addressing highlighted areas of need.

### **4. Potential impact**

Consider whether the activity or proposal may disadvantage people with protected characteristics when compared to people without these characteristics (think carefully about the following areas):

- Do people with certain protected characteristics use the service more than others? Might the proposal therefore particularly impact on them or people associated with them, such as their families or carers?
- The built environment (is it accessible - if not, are reasonable adjustments in place?)
- ICT (is it accessible – if not, are adaptive ICT solutions in place?)
- Communications (customer contact, paper, electronic, verbal etc - is it accessible?)
- User involvement/participation/consultation (is it inclusive of everyone & does it accommodate different needs?)
- Have all reasonable and proportionate options been explored to use the proposal as an opportunity to promote equality for the groups listed in (2) above?

Describe your conclusions below, clearly stating the evidence for your response, for audit purposes.

The Strategy has been developed to enhance and support the Gypsy and Traveller community with regards to accessing accommodation, health and education services as well as strengthening relations between the settled and Traveller community. The aim is to work with the community to improve service provision. The Strategy covers main identified areas of need but is not finite in its format. We will monitor the strategy and the action plans will be reviewed six monthly. Any apparent gaps in delivery of service that do not meet the County's duties to promote equality and fairness of access will be addressed and the action plan amended to incorporate improvement of delivery.

The Strategy and its action plan will be implemented by different agencies through specialist subgroups. Gypsies and Travellers will be represented at those subgroups and it will be our responsibility to reach out to the community to encourage participation and involvement with the different services available. The Gypsy and Traveller community may not be comfortable with accessing some areas of support due to cultural mistrust. The strategy and action plan will continue to work towards reducing and improving community tensions.

Some of the Gypsy and Traveller community are known to have lower literacy levels which may result in utilisation of resources such as schools and libraries less than the settled community.

The majority of the action plan will be delivered in an operational format, ie at officer level, liaising with other partner agencies and to the community in their homes. ICT is a relatively new media resource for many Gypsies and Travellers but the use of mobile phones and social websites is widening the remit of communication. It is recognised that not all Gypsies and Travellers (as in the settled community) will have modern forms of communication and any written documents will require an easy read format.

The strategy through the sub groups will focus on user involvement and person-centred approaches. The delivery of the services will be structured, resulting in a reduction of duplication of services and a more consistent approach. Consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community will be paramount to ensure the Strategy is fulfilling the areas of need identified.

## 5. Actions

Describe any actions to be carried out to address any potential adverse impact identified above.

Action/s	Lead	Date
1 Review the Action plan six monthly	Sub groups	
2 Develop easily read material	Sub Groups	
3 Person centred focus groups	Specialist Officers	

## 6. Completion & further information

To support you in your decision making please sign off your form with Neil Howard, Equality & Cohesion Officer, Planning, Performance & Partnerships team.

For questions and guidance about equality issues and help completing this assessment, please contact Neil Howard directly:

**Telephone:** 01603 224196

**Text:** 07901517721

**Email:** [Neil.Howard@Norfolk.Gov.uk](mailto:Neil.Howard@Norfolk.Gov.uk)

**Minicom:** 0344 800 8011

**Fax:** 01603 223096

**Signed:** Keren Wright

**Date of next review (if any):** March 2013

## Annual/three yearly review

Consider the impact your activity or proposal has achieved over the last year/three years, measured by your monitoring data. Think carefully about the following areas:

- 1 Is the same impact being achieved for people with protected characteristics compared to people without these characteristics – if not, why not?
- 2 Are the needs of people with protected characteristics being adequately met, where these may differ from people without these characteristics?
- 3 Is uptake of any opportunities associated with the activity or proposal generally representative of people with protected characteristics?
- 4 Does the customer/staff/volunteer profile reflect Norfolk's population – & if not, why not?

Describe your conclusions below, clearly stating the evidence for your response, for audit purposes.

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## Actions

Describe any actions to be carried out to address any issues identified above.

Action/s	Lead	Date
1		
2		

## Completion & further information

To support you in your decision making please sign off your form with Neil Howard, Equality & Cohesion Officer, Planning, Performance & Partnerships team.

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**Signed:** █

**Date of next review (if any):** █

# Norfolk County Council Equality Impact Assessments - Types of discrimination:

### Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perception discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see discrimination by association below).

### Discrimination by association

Already applies to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Now extended to cover age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

### Perception discrimination

Already applies to age, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, now extended to cover disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

### Indirect discrimination

Already applies to age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership, now extended to cover disability and gender reassignment. Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in your company that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if you can show that you acted reasonably in managing your business, ie that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

A *legitimate aim* might be any lawful decision you make in running your business or organisation, but if there is a discriminatory effect, the sole aim of reducing costs is likely to be unlawful.

Being proportionate really means being fair and reasonable, including showing that you've looked at 'less discriminatory' alternatives to any decision you make.

### Dual discrimination (*Currently delayed while government considers how the mechanics of this form of discrimination will be implemented*)

Dual discrimination is where a person is subject to direct discrimination on the grounds of no more than two of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation;

## Harassment

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. People will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves.

## Third party harassment

Already applies to sex, now extended to cover age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

As an employer, you can be held responsible for harassment of a worker by someone who doesn’t work for you, such as a customer. This is sometimes called ‘third party harassment’.

The company or organisation will become legally responsible if they know that their worker has been harassed by someone who does not work for them twice before but fail to take reasonable steps to protect the worker from further harassment. It does not have to be the same person harassing the worker on each occasion

## Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint. There is no longer a need to compare treatment of a complainant with that of a person who has not made or supported a complaint under the Act.