



TRAVELLER HOMES MATTER

itm Irish Traveller
movement

Five Steps to Homes for Travellers

- Establish a National Traveller Accommodation Agency
- Amend Part 8 of the Planning Act
- Repeal the Criminal Trespass Legislation. (Housing Miscellaneous Provision Act 2002)
- Respond to Travellers in Crisis Accommodation
- Make A Home A Constitutional Right

Establish a National Traveller Accommodation Agency

The Local Authority model used to deliver a home for Travellers has failed both Travellers and the Irish State ranging over 18 years and where Traveller families in need of accommodation has more than **doubled in the time**.

What Is Needed Now

We call for the establishment of an independent statutory body, to be known as the Traveller Accommodation Agency to draw up, in consultation with Travellers, a National Programme for Traveller specific accommodation which would monitor, assess, advise on and ensure implementation of the annual building and refurbishment and Traveller Accommodation programmes of local authorities.

Amend Part 8 of the Planning Act

Failures in the planning process for providing Traveller accommodation was highlighted as the principal reason for Local Authority under delivery in the Government's report 'Review of Funding for Traveller-Specific Accommodation and the Implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes (2000-2016).

Traveller accommodation is approved using several different approaches but mostly Local Authorities Part 8 of the planning process, which requires public consultation

What Is Needed Now

We call for an amendment to the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 to be introduced immediately to circumvent Part 8 away from the local political system and invested in an *An Bord Pleanála*.

Repeal Criminal Trespass Legislation 2002

Traveller Nomadism plays a vital role in the social, economic and cultural way of life and is part of who and what Travellers are. In 2002 Section 24 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act was brought into law making it a legal offense to be on private or public lands, which when implemented caused many Traveller families to be evicted, their homes confiscated, rendering them homeless and facing prosecution.

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation Act) 1998 recognised the need for transient sites as one of a range of accommodation options for Traveller families. Currently there are fewer than 50 Transient sites in the republic and almost all are in use for emergency accommodation.

What is Needed Now

- Repeal of Section 24 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002 prohibiting nomadism, a core element of Travellers cultural way of life.
- We call for the provision of a network of transient halting sites in each local authority area for short stays that would be exempted under Section 4 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.
- We call for transfer arrangements between Traveller families that are negotiable with the relevant local authorities.
- The Irish Traveller Movement call for greater supports and assistance for families negotiating their own accommodation on private lands/ sites.
- We call for the identification of public land for temporary camping purposes for families during different times of the year.

Respond to Traveller Families in Crisis Accommodation.

There is a crisis in accommodation nationally for Travellers, especially for those in need of emergency accommodation. Despite statutory requirements Travellers continue to live in poor conditions throughout Ireland on road sides, in temporary halting sites and in overcrowded conditions with health and safety risks. Travellers are **11 times more likely to become homeless and 22 times more likely to be discriminated by landlords**⁽¹⁾ There are 5 times the number of families sharing facilities since legislation took effect - accounting for **4,460 people in overcrowded halting sites and in standard housing.**⁽²⁾

What is Needed Now

- We call for Traveller-specific emergency accommodation hubs in each local authority area, in recognition of the high level of discrimination experienced by the Traveller community
- We call for additional facilities for Traveller families sharing and in overcrowded Traveller accommodation to be brought up to standard requirement in relation to sanitation and facilities.

- ❑ We call for a refurbishment programme that will prioritise some of the worst sites and group housing schemes in the country. This refurbishment Programme would bring a significant amount of families into a higher standard of living.
- ❑ We call for Traveller accommodation “out of use” in recent years to be reopened and refurbished by local authorities in consultation with the community.
- ❑ We call on Local Authority County Managers to use their emergency powers to provide emergency accommodation to families living on roadside encampments pending permanent accommodation.

Make A Home A Constitutional Right

Travellers are afforded a statutory right to accommodation within the Irish state via the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, which requires local authorities to provide culturally appropriate accommodation in all its forms, including: halting sites, group housing schemes, standard houses and transient accommodation in the Republic of Ireland to Travellers.

The 2017 Government report '*Review of Funding for Traveller-Specific Accommodation and the Implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes (2000-2016)*' confirmed consistent failings in the Local Authority implementing structure with **substantial under delivery** over 16 years and only 68% of units delivered, **underspending** before, during and post austerity (55 million euro) , **a failed planning process** , **poor quality of building**, **no planning for future population growth** and **a lack of accountability and transparency** of Local Authority practice.

What Is Needed Now

- ❑ A constitutional change which would include Travellers within the broad framework of housing protection and bring about a safeguarding for the community given its vulnerabilities to homelessness, lack of adequate provision, disproportionate subjection to eviction and inadequate supply of Traveller culturally specific accommodation, including nomadic provision. This constitutional protection could contribute to fundamental life chances including improvements in health, education, employment and eradicate a legacy culture of exclusion and disadvantage.

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