



## **Crime and Policing Bill 2025**

**House of Commons**

**Written evidence submitted to the Public Bill Committee by the Traveller  
Movement (CPB66)**

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## **Introduction**

This briefing sets out how the Crime and Policing Bill (the Bill) presents a unique opportunity for Parliament to restore fundamental human rights to Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers through the repeal of sections 60C - E of the [Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994](#). These sections, introduced through Part 4 of the [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022](#), created a new criminal offence relating to trespass and gave police additional powers to ban Romani (Gypsies) and Travellers from an area for up to 12 months, alongside powers to fine, arrest, imprison and seize their homes.

A successful judicial review led to a High Court ruling in May 2024 that concluded that some of these powers are incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights because of the impact on Romani (Gypsy) and Traveller communities. The incompatibility with human rights legislation must be addressed by parliament and this Bill provides that opportunity through the repeal of sections 60C-E of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

Our briefing also focuses on the need to put in place safeguards in respect of the extension on anti-social behaviour provisions and putting an end to the disproportionate and discriminatory treatment of Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Travellers by law enforcement. Stronger safeguards against the abuse of statutory powers are desperately needed, as evidenced by the recent use of dispersal powers in Manchester, where children were forcibly removed from public areas by police. Other examples of systemic issues faced by these communities are revealed in regular reports of racial abuse, excessive force and a lack of accountability.

### **Part 1, Clause 1: Respect Orders**

#### **Ensuring Anti-Social Behaviour Powers are Fit for Purpose / Requiring an Independent Review of Anti-social Behaviour Powers**

We believe that Respect Orders are unnecessary and replicate powers already available within the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (“the 2014 Act”). We’re particularly concerned that new powers are being introduced without any formal review of existing powers having taken place and without proper consultation with those responsible for using them. The Government should be working to address the problems inherent with the existing anti-social behaviour powers and orders before creating more.

We believe that there are serious systemic problems with the way that existing Behavioural Control Orders in the 2014 Act operate, as identified by Justice in their [evidence](#) to the public bill committee. This includes issues with the investigation, enforcement and monitoring of Community Protection Notices, Public Spaces

Protection Orders, Dispersal Powers and Criminal Behaviour Orders. Behavioural Control Orders are civil orders however breaching a prohibition or requirement within an order is a criminal offence. These orders bypass the procedures and evidential standards of the criminal law whilst still attracting criminal sanctions. There is scant attention being paid to their discriminatory impact, with insufficient safeguards in place to prevent discrimination. Research and FOI data demonstrates that Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Traveller communities are more likely to be subject to these orders. They are also more likely to receive disproportionate criminal punishments upon breaching the orders which draws already vulnerable and disproportionately represented communities into the criminal justice system.

These disproportionate outcomes are partially driven by the significant variation and the lack of monitoring of the use of Behavioural Control Orders across the country in terms of the volume of orders imposed, the type of orders used for any given situation and the conditions imposed. We have seen Dispersal Orders used in recent weeks to remove Irish Travellers from a pub after they were allegedly denied service and from a Tesco car park when they were moved along from another caravan park.

By expanding these powers without conducting a proper independent review the Bill will worsen existing problems.

### **Part 1 Clause 3: Maximum period in certain directions, notices and orders**

The Traveller Movement has reason to be very concerned about extension to dispersal powers in light of the incidents that occurred in Manchester in November 2024 when Greater Manchester Police (GMP) used these powers to prevent Romani Gypsies and Irish Traveller children from attending Christmas markets. We believe that GMP contravened essential legal and ethical duties when exercising their statutory powers, particularly regarding their handling of minors and their failure to uphold safeguarding standards.

Video footage widely shared online showed children as young as 10 being forcibly removed from the city center and Manchester Victoria train station by a significant number of GMP officers. Key concerns include:

- **Separation from families:** Children were placed on trains bound for unknown destinations without ensuring they could return home safely.
- **Physical aggression:** Reports include officers shoving, pulling hair, and handcuffing children.
- **Verbal abuse:** Witnesses reported officers using racial slurs, including calling children “pikeys”.
- **Lack of accountability:** Some officers allegedly removed their badge numbers during the operation.

What happened in Manchester is not an isolated event and we have repeatedly raised concerns about the policing of these communities, most recently in our submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2024.<sup>1</sup>

Research<sup>2</sup> by the Traveller Movement on policing Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities in the UK found that of the 45 territorial police forces only two had targeted strategies and/or plans for improving relations with Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities. Police officers and community members who participated in the research described the protected ethnicities being treated as a risk factor by the police, indicating that there is an entrenched discriminatory approach to policing these communities. In addition to these findings, the Traveller Movement regularly receives reports from police officers, community members and service providers that the police have at times advised them to deny Romani (Gypsies) or Irish Travellers access to their establishments (e.g. restaurants, pubs, bars). Within this research, police respondents reported Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities being associated with crime and/or violence and recounted higher police turnouts to calls regarding incidents involving Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller people compared to other communities.

This research also highlighted the prevalence of discriminatory and racist language used by police officers to describe Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller people. This language often goes unchallenged; police forces are failing to eliminate unlawful discrimination and instead are perpetuating it. The report attributes this widespread discrimination to a systemic issue within police forces with interviewees noting that disciplinary procedures are not applied equally to instances of anti-Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller hate. Despite the widespread discrimination faced by Romani (Gypsy), Roma, and Irish Traveller people within police forces, there has been little targeted action or review by the government to address this issue. The Baroness Casey Review which looked the culture and standards of behaviour in the Metropolitan Police concluded that there is institutional racism, sexism and homophobia yet there was no mention of the organisation's treatment of Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller people.

It is important that Parliament puts in place safeguards in this Bill to address these issues and to ensure that events such as those that occurred in Manchester are not repeated.

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<sup>1</sup> [Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\) on the rights of Romani, Roma and Irish Traveller communities in the United Kingdom 113th session, August 2024](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Policing by consent: Understanding and improving relations between Gypsies, Roma, Travellers and the police](#)

## **Part 9: Public Order**

### **The case for repeal of section 60C-E of the [Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994](#)**

In a landmark decision handed down last year, [Smith, R \(On the Application Of\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2024\] EWHC 1137 \(Admin\) \(14 May 2024\)](#) the High Court decided that certain aspects of Sections 60C - E are incompatible with Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights ('ECHR' (the prohibition on discrimination) read with Article 8 ECHR (the right to private life) as they amount to unjustified discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers. The High Court took the significant and unusual step of issuing a declaration of incompatibility under section 4 of the Human Rights Act 1998, which means that Parliament will have to review those provisions to ensure their compatibility with the ECHR. That has not yet happened. This Bill presents an opportunity to rectify this situation by repealing Sections 60C-E of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and putting an end to this unjustified discrimination.

### **Background: Site Provision**

Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Travellers have a historical and cultural relationship to particular ways of living, this includes living in caravans which is as much connected to the cultural of the communities as travelling. However, due to a failure to provide adequate site provision today the majority of Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Travellers live in 'bricks and mortar' accommodation. The Traveller Movement knows that most Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Travellers would prefer to live in more traditional accommodation rather than among the settled community, but this is not possible because of the lack of site provision. This chronic shortage of sites nationally is widely recognised as one of the most pressing issues facing Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Travellers. The lack of secure accommodation was described by the European Court of Human Rights as the lynchpin that underpinned all the other inequalities faced by these communities. There is also an undeniable relationship between the level of insecure accommodation experienced by the communities and their overall poor health outcomes.

Research conducted in 2024 revealed that just 9% of local authorities had transit provision in their area.<sup>3</sup> A 2023 research report, 'Kicking the can down the road'<sup>4</sup>, found that out of the 100 planning authorities which formed part of the research, 64% had failed to allocate sites in their Local Plan as part of their development process. Furthermore, the same report found that of the 149 socially provided sites across the 100 Local Planning Authorities, 119 were built before 1994, with only 30 built since then (after the

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<sup>3</sup> [Friends, Families and Travellers Local authority transit provision for Gypsies and Travellers across the UK](#) November 2024

<sup>4</sup> [Kicking the can down the road. New report on site provision over the past 60 years](#)

statutory duty to provide sites had been revoked). According to the Government Caravan Count figures, between January 2014 and January 2024, there was a decrease of 102 permanent pitches.<sup>5</sup>

### **Legislative Changes**

A number of legislative changes over the last ten years have further limited the ability of Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller people to live their traditional way of life. In 2015 the UK Government updated its Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (the policy) changing the definition of ‘Gypsy’ or ‘Traveller’ so that those who had permanently ceased to travel were no longer classed as Gypsies or Travellers, regardless of the reasons for ceasing travel. Following this change the Equality and Human Rights Commission conducted research which looked at the needs assessment conducted by local authorities before and after the changes and found that the requirement fell by almost 75%.<sup>6</sup> This demonstrates how many Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Traveller people who require culturally appropriate accommodation are now not being considered for such.

The addition of sections 6C – E of Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 through Part 4 of the [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022](#) was a further step in criminalising and eradicating the Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Traveller traditional way of life, by effectively banning roadside living. The Act granted the police the authority to ban Gypsies and Travellers from an area for up to 12 months, an increase from the previous three months. Additionally, the Act included powers to fine, arrest, imprison, and seize the homes of Gypsies and Travellers in roadside camps.

In February 2025 the Traveller Movement sent Freedom of Information requests to all 43 territorial police forces. Of the 43 police forces contacted, we received 33 responses (77%) and of those responses 13 forces (30%) confirmed that [Section 60C of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994](#) was in use for a total of 161 times.

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<sup>5</sup> Friends, Families and Travellers [Submission for the seventh periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)

<sup>6</sup> EHRC [Gypsy and Traveller sites: the revised planning definition’s impact on assessing accommodation needs \(2019\)](#)

## **Note on Terminology**

Often government documents will speak of ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ or ‘GRT’ communities. Broadly speaking, communities referred to under GRT fall into two categories: ethnic minority groups with protected characteristics, and cultural or lifestyle-based nomadic groups. Under the Equality Act 2010, the protected characteristic of “race” encompasses colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins. The Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities are explicitly protected under the Act due to their distinct ethnic backgrounds.

Throughout this document we attempt to accurately portray which of the ethnic communities is being affected by this Bill, however, we want to ensure that we do not misrepresent the findings of the judicial review, which spoke specifically of Gypsy and Traveller communities.

## **About the Traveller Movement**

The Traveller Movement is a registered UK charity promoting inclusion and community engagement with Romani (Gypsies), Roma and Irish Travellers. The Traveller Movement seeks to empower and support Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities to advocate for the full implementation of their human rights.