

Blaenau Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2020

This document is available in Welsh
Mae'r dogfen hon ar gael yn Cymraeg

Executive Summary

The Blaenau Gwent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2020 (GTAA) provides an updated, robust evidence base for understanding the current and future accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople within the County Borough for the period 2020–2033. The study was undertaken by Opinion Research Services (ORS) on behalf of the Council and is required under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which obliges local authorities to assess needs every five years.

Purpose and Policy Context

The GTAA ensures Blaenau Gwent meets statutory duties to:

- Identify current and future accommodation needs.
- Support the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018–2033.
- Inform fair, sustainable planning policy aligned with Welsh Government Circular 005/2018.

The assessment covers:

- Gypsies and Travellers (including Romany, Irish Travellers, Welsh Gypsies).
- Travelling Showpeople.
- Households living on sites and in bricks-and-mortar housing.

Methodology

- A project steering group was established, including Council officers and site residents.
- Extensive engagement was conducted, including letters, posters, interviews, and targeted outreach.
- 28 household interviews were completed:
 - 17 on the Cwmcrachen public site
 - 4 on private sites
 - 7 in bricks and mortar housing
- Multiple data sources were analysed: caravan counts, planning records, demographics, and local authority data.

Current Provision

At the 2020 baseline, Blaenau Gwent had:

- 1 public residential site (Cwmcrachen) – 19 pitches
- 2 private sites – 6 pitches
- No transit sites, unauthorised sites, or Showpeople yards

There were no vacant pitches, no expected near-term vacancies, and no new pitches with planning permission at the time of assessment.

Key Findings

Accommodation Conditions

- 42% of residents were dissatisfied with current accommodation—primarily those on the Cwmcrachen site.
- Main concerns: overcrowding, small pitches, limited parking, poor drainage, out-of-date amenity blocks, site maintenance issues.
- 82% of Cwmcrachen residents felt the site needs to be expanded.

Demographics

- 64 individuals were represented across surveyed households.
- 53% of the population were aged 20 or under, implying substantial future household formation.
- No evidence of overcrowded or doubled-up households at the time of assessment.

Movement and Aspirations

- Most households intend to remain where they are.
- Only 1 household was on the waiting list for the public site.
- Three young adults expected to require their own pitches within 2–5 years.

Transit Need

- No unauthorised encampments have been recorded since 2019.
- Some residents travel elsewhere in the UK but this does not generate a local transit need.
- It was concluded there was no requirement for a transit site at present; continued monitoring was recommended.

Accommodation Need (2020–2033)

Time Period	Additional Pitches Required
First 5 years	3 pitches

Time Period	Additional Pitches Required
Years 6–13	5 pitches
Total Need	8 pitches

There is no current or future need for Travelling Showpeople plots.

Recommendations

1. Provide 8 additional residential pitches during the LDP period to 2033.
2. Consider expanding or replacing the Cwmcrachen site, ensuring:
 - Larger pitches
 - Modern amenity blocks
 - Improved parking and drainage
3. Continue monitoring for unauthorised encampments and revisit transit needs if patterns change.
4. Use the GTAA findings to inform:
 - The Replacement Local Development Plan 2018–2033
 - Local Housing Market Assessments
 - The Local Housing Strategy
5. Continue engagement with Gypsy and Traveller communities when planning future provision.