

12 May 2023

SCOTTISH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Dear Chief Executive,

The Scottish Human Rights Commission is Scotland's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), charged with promoting and protecting the human rights of all individuals living in Scotland. We work independently of government and are funded by the Scottish Parliament.

The Commission continues to focus its efforts on tackling the long-standing human rights concerns of some of the most marginalised communities in Scotland, which includes the Scottish Gypsy Traveller Community. We recently visited members of that Community and one of their main concerns related to the housing conditions on their sites. We saw first-hand the dilapidated condition of some of those chalets and caravans. Gypsy/Travellers living on sites owned by councils in Scotland have the right to the same quality standards and level of service as tenants living in social housing.

The Commission welcomes the Scottish Government's £20m accommodation fund for site re-development, to meet the varying needs of families, including children, older and disabled people. However, one of the main concerns expressed by members of the Community, from a variety of sites across Scotland, was the lack of meaningful engagement and dialogue between community members and local authorities. Community members also welcomed the increased funding from the Scottish Government but were concerned about (i) transparency over funding provided to local authorities and (ii) a lack of engagement and

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co-design in accommodation choices. This has led to some members feeling compelled to accept lower-standard chalets and accommodation which was not always culturally appropriate.

The Commission encourages all local authorities to adopt a [Human Rights Based Approach](#) on the provision of housing to the Scottish Gypsy Traveller Community. This includes ensuring meaningful participation and choice by communities in the design of new housing policies.

I would be grateful for any information you can share about your work on Scottish Gypsy Traveller accommodation, including how much central government funding you have received and disbursed to date.

The Commission stands ready to help local authorities in Scotland adopt a human rights based approach to their work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Duddy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ian Duddy

Chair, Scottish Human Rights Commission