

# **COVID-19 Framework for Local Decision Making on Gypsy/ Traveller Support**

**Updated March 2022**



## COVID-19 Framework for Local Decision Making on Gypsy/Traveller Support – Updated March 2022

### **What is the purpose of this document?**

To provide a framework for supporting Gypsy/Traveller communities living on public and private sites, and in unauthorised encampments in Scottish Local Authorities, to manage the risks and issues related to COVID 19. To be read alongside existing guidance on Managing Unauthorised Encampments.

### **Who should read it?**

- Those involved in local resilience partnerships;
- Local Authority staff including Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officers, Site Managers and those providing temporary accommodation;
- NHS Directors of Public Health and IJB Chief Officers;
- Police Scotland; and
- Anyone who is involved in planning and providing support to Gypsy/ Travellers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Key messages**

- Gypsy/Travellers face additional risks from COVID-19. Living in a trailer or caravan may make it difficult to limit virus spread within camps and comply with public health advice;
- Gypsy/Travellers are more likely to have pre-existing health conditions and be at increased risk of poverty, fuel poverty, food insecurity etc. so it is important that they are linked to wider local support and services;
- Local Authorities and their partners should provide appropriate support to help Gypsy/Travellers to follow health advice, test and protect and other public health guidelines, including accessing a vaccination, sanitation and safe stopping places; and
- Provision should be focused on those most in need and underpinned by a public health and human rights approach.

# COVID-19 Recovery: Supporting Gypsy/Traveller Communities

Framework Updated – March 2022

## **1. Background and Introduction**

This framework is intended to:

- ensure that support is available at an appropriate level as we continue to manage the public health risks of Covid-19; and
- contribute to promoting equality, tackling disadvantage and delivery of human rights among Gypsy/Travellers.

The unequal impact of Covid 19 on ethnic minorities is well established. Individuals and communities who already experience the greatest inequality in society are the ones who are most negatively affected by health impacts, economic impacts and limitations on services.

This framework was first published on 7 April 2020 in response to the immediate challenges presented by the first lockdown. A revised version, published in June 2020, provided updated information, as restrictions were lifted. We know that there will continue to be risks from the virus for the foreseeable future and that some of the new ways of living together, working and delivering services are likely to remain in place. Scotland's [Strategic Framework Update](#), published in February 2022, assesses where we are in the pandemic and sets out Scotland's approach to managing COVID-19 and its associated harms effectively for the long term as we prepare for a calmer phase of the pandemic. In this phase, there is an opportunity to embed approaches which allow Gypsy/Traveller communities to follow public health advice and access the facilities and services that they need on an ongoing basis.

### **1.1 Purpose of the document**

This document provides a framework to assist Local Authorities and their partners, including the NHS and the third sector, to make decisions about the local public health response and support that can be put in place for Gypsy/Travellers as we continue to manage the risks of COVID-19 and wider impacts of the pandemic. The Framework forms part of the [joint Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan, Improving the Lives of Gypsy/Travellers](#), now extended to October 2022, which has the support of the Scottish Government and all 32 Local Authorities. It is also in line with and builds on the existing national guidance on [Managing Unauthorised Encampments](#).

This work is also part of the Scottish Government's public health response to COVID-19 as it aims to protect the health of individual people in marginalised groups and to support the public health measures designed to prevent the spread of the virus.

Local Authorities should draw on the advice of their Chief Social Work Officers, Heads of Housing, Joint Board Chief Officers, equalities officers, internal resilience teams, and NHS Directors of Public Health as well as referring to up to date public

health advice on NHS inform. They will also want to ensure that their response to Gypsy/Travellers takes full advantage of various other means of support being developed and delivered both nationally and locally in response to COVID-19.

It is anticipated that support for Gypsy/Travellers should be discussed on a multi-agency basis locally, for example through Local Resilience Partnerships, and escalated as necessary.

## 1.2 Leadership and Strategic Direction

On Friday 21 March 2020, COSLA Group Leaders unanimously agreed that Gypsy/Travellers living roadside should be supported through the Covid 19 outbreak, including with access to basic sanitation and services – toilets, water, bins and wash facilities. This position, and the work of Local Government and partners to implement it, is helping to ensure that public health and poverty mitigation measures in place to address COVID-19 are accessible to Gypsy/Travellers. Whilst the provision of support and local resilience planning is a local decision, there is clear political agreement that the response to COVID-19 should not discriminate and needs to focus on minority ethnic communities who face additional vulnerabilities.

On Friday 25 June 2021, COSLA Leaders reconsidered support for roadside encampments and agreed that local authority support for Gypsy/Travellers should continue to align with a public health-based assessment of needs and that the following underpinning principles should guide local decisions on sanitation and enforcement action:

- That people should not be moved on from a temporary encampment if they don't have another encampment to go to where they can access sanitation and safe living conditions; and
- That sanitation needs to be available/accessible to people living on roadside encampments who need it – albeit with local discretion on how that is provided e.g. it can be provided roadside or an appropriate place can be provided for people to stop which gives them access to sanitation.

The updated Framework is designed to help to deliver this and to support local authorities to make decisions about the support that should be provided.

## 1.3 Principles for Supporting Encampments

As we learn to live with COVID 19, we need to ensure that support arrangements provide an appropriate level of protection for the encampment and the wider community and that this approach remains as consistent as possible.

We see ongoing priorities as:

- **A safe place to live** – there is an ongoing need for suitable stopping places for people living roadside and good quality, accessible, affordable site provision to protect public health as well as to fulfil our equality and human rights duties. Provision is particularly important for families with children and people with health and social care needs in addition to families who may face higher risks of

financial insecurity and low income at this time and/or have less stable access to sanitation and safe living conditions. The Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund has been established and an [Interim Site Design Guide published](#), to support site development, in line with the intention to support Gypsy/Travellers to realise their right to an adequate home;

- **Access to Sanitation**– making sure people have access to the facilities they need to stay healthy and safe, including access to toilets, water and waste facilities. The type of support provided to an encampment and the length of time it is provided for should enable people to comply with public health advice or restrictions and respond to identified needs within the household. Where there is a Covid 19 outbreak on a camp, additional provision may be required;
- **Communication and Information** – to provide the Community with health advice and the relevant information on [Test and Protect](#), as it adapts to be proportionate to the requirements of future phases. Communication should be accessible and relevant to the Gypsy/Traveller lifestyle. This includes improved digital access to allow Gypsy/Travellers who will need to be supported to access services which are increasingly being provided online;
- **Access to services** – multi-agency supports for Gypsy/Travellers including access to and engagement with wider public services including NHS services, education, employability support and advice services such as income maximisation, will be even more important for addressing inequalities faced by Gypsy/Travellers. This includes managing risks to service provision during periods when services are under pressure/ experiencing higher staff shortages;
- **Prioritising the most vulnerable families** - The local authority should prioritise the provision of support for people who have greater vulnerability, for example:
  - encampments that are living permanently roadside and do not have an alternative safe place to go.
  - where there are particular health and social care needs among, older people, children, pregnant women, disabled individuals and their families, or others living on the camp; and
- **Collaborative working** -Local Authorities may wish to consider working together to ensure that support can be made available. For example, if there is a potentially suitable location for an encampment or a more appropriate support offer in a neighbouring Local Authority area, councils should engage with each other to establish any options and then liaise with families to discuss alternative offers of support. There will be a continued need to support liaison with encampments as well as with the wider community to ensure access to public health information for people living on encampments and reduce any community tensions e.g. liaison with private landowners and settled residents

In delivering this and the position agreed by COSLA Leaders, Local Authority approaches to supporting Gypsy/Travellers should be guided by:

- **Human rights and public health principles.** COVID-19 continues to present a risk to Gypsy/Travellers so there is a continued need to support them in line with public health and human rights duties and principles and statutory Equality and Fairer Scotland duties; and
- **Participation and engagement:** A core principle to guide decisions in all circumstances is the need to engage with Gypsy/Travellers directly to understand

their particular circumstances and what responses are needed to keep people safe.

As well as access to water and sanitation to meet basic health needs, the work that Local Authorities and their partners do across a wide range of areas contributes to Gypsy/Travellers realising their rights - providing safe stopping places, ensuring assistance is in place for people who contract Covid, providing additional support to protect the rights of people with disabilities, older people and young children. Gypsy/Travellers have the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health which is supported by health and social care services which are accessible, available, appropriate and high quality. Access to these services will support people to have good mental well-being, reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and ensure that people can eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active. People should also be supported to exercise their cultural lifestyle choices and respecting different cultural needs and requirements as far as practically possible.

#### **1.4 Funding for delivery**

The support that local authorities are able to provide is contingent on available funding and will need to be determined locally. Scottish Government has provided £25 million flexible funding to support households experiencing financial insecurity over the Winter in 2021-22. The purpose of the flexible funding is to enable local authorities to support wellbeing by preventing and responding to financial insecurity. Guidance to assist local decision making in deploying this resource is available: [Financial insecurity: guidance to local authorities over winter 2021-2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultations-petitions/Publications/2021/04/Financial_insecurity_guidance_to_local_authorities_over_winter_2021-2022.pdf)

It is recommended that local authorities use some of their allocation of this fund to implement the framework, alongside any other local sources of funding that may be available.

Local Authorities have been asked to return monitoring forms detailing the use of this fund to [foodinsecurityteam@gov.scot](mailto:foodinsecurityteam@gov.scot) by **Friday 29 April 2022**. Local Authorities are encouraged to clearly record within their returns any circumstances where these funds are used to provide support to Gypsy/Travellers.

Working with partners in the third sector, we have provided over £100,000 to support digital inclusion efforts. Thousands of families and young people have benefited through bespoke training to access vital services via our partners at MECOPP, Article 12 and STEP. MECOPP has been awarded £453,646 of core funding for 3 years to deliver support for Gypsy/Traveller communities in a wide range of areas. STEP has also been awarded £500,000 of core funding for 3 years to support young Gypsy/Travellers with their education and ensure they achieve their potential and positive destinations.

The Scottish Government is supporting a number of health related work programmes in partnership with MECOPP, Progress in Dialogue and Scottish Public Health Network to tackle the health inequalities experienced by many Gypsy/Travellers in

Scotland. These include; Community Health Matters which recruits and trains members of Gypsy/Traveller Communities to improve the health and well-being of fellow Gypsy/Travellers; Mental Health Matters which is piloting support to Gypsy/Traveller families to improve mental health and well-being, as well as a programme to tackle and raise awareness of the impact of hate crime, stigma and discrimination on mental health and well-being.

### **1.5 Policy Context - Why Gypsy/Travellers are at Increased Risk and Need Additional Support**

Gypsy/Travellers face some specific additional risks and vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic that are important to consider within local resilience plans and which may make it difficult for them to limit virus spread and comply with public health guidelines. These include:

- Overcrowding in trailers, and between trailers, and sharing of toilets, washing and kitchen facilities;
- Limited access to space for self-isolation;
- For those living roadside, reliance on toilet/washing facilities, for example in leisure centres and retail parks, some of which may have reduced access due to the pandemic;
- Hostile attitudes from settled communities towards encampments, causing people to move from place to place, sometimes with difficulty in finding a safe location to move to. This results in challenges in accessing employment and services e.g. to book and take-up vaccination appointments;
- Difficulties keeping up to date on changing public health messages, due to literacy or digital exclusion issues as well as fear of engagement with and trust in authorities, including challenges in registering with some GP Practices, lack of awareness of and access to other community healthcare services such as dentistry, eye care (optometry) and Pharmacy; and
- A higher number of underlying health conditions, potentially resulting in more serious illness.

Gypsy/Traveller communities also face additional issues including racism and discrimination, poverty and barriers to accessing mainstream services.

Gypsy/Travellers are:

- more often self-employed workers, often in lower paid trades. They therefore face significant financial insecurity and risks as a result of loss of income if unable to work. They may also have less experience/be less able to provide the evidence needed to make a benefits claim, including Universal Credit, and the Scottish Welfare Fund, as well as wider services which identify and assist vulnerable groups, such as, disability benefits and Carers Allowance and support.
- understood to have higher risks of poor mental health and suicide. They may struggle to maintain their health and wellbeing if they are living in houses and will be unable to travel as part of their cultural and nomadic lifestyle during this period;
- more likely to face exclusions to educational services and support, for example children being missed from educational supports due to being unable to attend

school consistently and/or if they do not have digital access on sites or related support to navigate digital resources;

- more likely to be unbanked and therefore be reliant on cash, which some shops are moving away from;
- less likely to have food storage facilities – or the financial resources - to be able to stock up and plan ahead; and
- more likely to be fuel poor due to low level insulation in trailers and amenity blocks and be in need of regular card top ups or access to gas or liquid fuel.

The combined impact of all of these factors is a risk of extreme poverty. Whilst people living on public sector sites are likely to be connected to support via their Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officers, site managers or other Local Authority or health and social care officers, this may not be the case for those living on private sites, or for those living roadside or in houses.

## **1.6 Feedback and Review**

This Framework will apply for as long Covid 19 presents a significant public health risk. There are some examples of practice in support for Gypsy/Travellers which, together with the evidence gathered during the Negotiated Stopping pilot, can inform an approach to providing support going forward, depending on local circumstances. Examples are at section 6 below.

Local Authorities are asked to provide regular updates on what is happening in their area to [dominique@cosla.gov.uk](mailto:dominique@cosla.gov.uk). If other's have comments on the framework or its operation, please email [gypsytravellers@gov.scot](mailto:gypsytravellers@gov.scot)



## **2. Putting Principles for Supporting Encampments in to Practice**

Support that can be put in place should be locally determined and reviewed in line with changing public health advice and available public services. It should draw on sources of funding that may be available to meet public health needs and/or safeguard and protect people's rights and fulfil statutory equality and Fairer Scotland duties.

### **2.1 Roadside Encampments**

Guidance on [Managing Unauthorised Encampments](#) sets out some basic principles to be followed that continue to be relevant during this period:

- Local Authorities should seek to manage unauthorised sites to minimise disruption for all concerned and ensure that any anti-social behaviour is tackled firmly, regardless of who the perpetrators are; and
- The same standards of behaviour should be expected from all members of the community, whether Gypsy/Travellers or the settled community, based on mutual respect and with regard to the rights and responsibilities of all those concerned.

The key stages set out in the guidance are:

- An initial site visit to speak to the residents, assess the situation, establish the length of time that the residents wish to remain on the camp and reach agreement with residents on services that might need to be in place for this to be supported and/or for encampments to shift safely when they move on. Covid 19 should be discussed and an assessment should be made of any additional needs in order to meet health protection needs, particularly where there are people in the camp who are at risk e.g. due to age or health conditions;
- A decision on the most appropriate, proportionate response to keep the people in the camp and the wider community safe, for example, supporting the encampment where it is, or identifying an alternative location/space on a permanent site or within the Local Authority area; and
- An agreement with the camp members on the best way forward and provision of appropriate services, the length of time it will be required or be available for, as well as any conditions placed on the provision of the services e.g. requirements relating to use of waste removal facilities.

Other considerations are:

- The reasons people are living roadside—e.g. living permanently roadside due to cultural lifestyle; travelling because of seasonal based work patterns; travelling temporarily for cultural reasons or to support family. These should be taken in to account when determining the type and duration of support that can be provided. Support should be prioritised for more vulnerable families;
- Families will have different requirements, some may wish to camp without sanitation. However, unless it is rejected there should be a specific focus on ensuring people have access to safe places to wash and access toilet facilities in order to comply with public health guidelines;
- Where the local authority is unable to reach agreement with a family on the support that can be made available; and/or support is withdrawn the decision and

reasons for refusal/withdrawal should be clearly communicated to the family and efforts taken to refer them safely to alternative assistance if available;

- The local authority should ensure that Gypsy/Travellers understand their rights to make a homelessness application and to apply for housing in the local area. For some families, this will not meet their cultural preferences but, for others, it may be the preferred option; and
- A site in another local authority may be considered, where the neighbouring authority is in agreement and where this best meets the family's needs. A site in another local authority should not be signposted without discussion and agreement between authorities.

## 2.2 Negotiated Stopping

- Local Authorities may want to consider adopting approaches such as 'negotiated stopping' which advocates positive engagement with sites and the use of written agreements to determine the provision and use of services on encampments, along with agreeing expectations such as noise levels, safe disposal of waste and communication with the Local Authority on any changing circumstances.

COSLA continues to work with Local Authorities as part of the national action plan, to develop and test effective approaches to managing roadside encampments and to 'pilot' negotiated stopping models in Scotland. This work is currently including a focus on developing practice in relation to areas as follows:

- Supporting families with children and adults with care needs living on roadside encampments;
- Provision of sanitation;
- Identification of safe and suitable stopping places; and
- Engagement and participation.

Please contact [dominique@cosla.gov.uk](mailto:dominique@cosla.gov.uk) for more information.

## 2.3 Public Sector Sites

The emergency [Coronavirus \(Scotland\) Act](#) came in to force on 5 April 2020 and will expire on the 24 March 2022, except for 5 provisions which have been extended in regulations to 24 September 2022 through [The Coronavirus Act 2020 \(Alteration of Expiry Date\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#). The Act includes measures on evictions to protect tenants. The Minimum Standards on Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation set out the rights and responsibilities for occupancy agreements on public sector Gypsy/Traveller sites, including guidelines for ending a tenancy. Where relevant, Social Landlords should extend the same protection to Gypsy/Travellers sites as to tenants in social housing. In addition:

- Social Landlords should work with residents to review and assess arrangements on public sector sites to ensure that they meet the need, including any newly arising needs for services. This includes identifying where broadband/Wi-Fi connections are a barrier to accessing services which are predominantly provided online and making plans with residents to overcome this; and

- Continued support should be provided to those at higher risk of developing severe illness with coronavirus (formerly 'shielding group'). Needs should be considered around for example, isolation or emotional support.

## **2.4 Private Sites**

Some private Gypsy/Traveller sites operate on a private rental basis, with different families renting a pitch directly from a private landlord, who may or may not live on the site. Other private sites are occupied by a family group who own the land themselves.

There are likely to be people at high risk living on private sites, who may be less well connected with the information and services they need to keep themselves safe and well, and to cope if they become ill. Local Authorities may be able to identify private Gypsy/Traveller sites in their area by checking with Planning departments on whether they are generally aware of sites or can provide information on current planning permissions. Local Authorities will also need to consider sites that have not yet had planning permission but may have people living on them.

If there is an outbreak on a private site, the local authority, with the local Health Board Health Protection Teams, should seek to assess any specific public health risks and to work with landlords to ensure the appropriate support is in place. The accommodation and washing facilities on private sites will vary but there may be a need for additional facilities and Local Authorities can consider whether the offer of additional sanitation should be extended to private sites. There should be an awareness that individuals/families may be reluctant to report lack of adequate services due to fear of eviction from the site owner so additional engagement may be needed.

## **2.5 Establishing and meeting accommodation needs and demands**

If an encampment is in place for a prolonged period during the operation of the Framework and/or a family expresses a desire to remain in the local authority area, the local authority should work with the family to understand their accommodation needs. If a family is seeking to remain in the local authority area in the longer term, every effort should be made to find them a settled location, such as a permanent pitch on a local authority site, so that they can continue to engage with services and to avoid risks of breaks in education, homelessness and inadequate living standards.

In circumstances where an encampment is seeking to remain in the local area and there is a lack of alternative site provision, the Local Authority should ensure this is reflected within their local Housing Needs and Demands Assessments (HNDA) and that any ongoing needs for permanent, seasonal or transit or stopping place provision in the local area are captured and considered.

Whilst work is undertaken to assess the needs and demands or viability of new or additional site provision, Local authorities should seek to meet immediate needs. This might include sustaining support to a temporary encampment or developing temporary provision until a permanent option is available.

## 2.6 Provision for unauthorised encampments if there is a COVID-19 outbreak

Where there is an outbreak on an encampment, direct engagement will all local authorities to understand the specific risks and vulnerabilities of residents and what measures may be required. Staff working on or visiting sites should follow the advice from Health Protection Scotland on working in non-healthcare settings available at: <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/>

As part of resilience planning, Local Authorities should identify suitable land for encampments and/or to support self-isolation and physical distancing. If appropriate, this can be done on a regional basis, with Local Authorities working together to identify appropriate locations.

For encampments of Gypsy/Travellers who do not have a settled home, if there are Covid 19 cases in a camp, or local travel restrictions have been re-introduced, in order to protect public health:

- Local Authorities should only consider eviction or dispersing a camp where the location of an encampment is unsuitable for health or safety reasons or if there is another good reason, for example antisocial behaviour;
- Local Authorities should not move anyone on until they are able to access a safe alternative stopping place and sanitation;
- Local Authorities should work with residents to identify and agree any local provision and arrangements for moving encampments;
- Local Authorities should seek to work with private landowners to avoid eviction or harassment;
- Where possible, encampments experiencing an outbreak should be provided with:
  - sanitation, in the form of toilets and hand washing facilities to allow families to self-isolate within a caravan and limit sharing of facilities and therefore risk spreading the virus. As an alternative, Local Authorities can provide another appropriate location with access to sanitation;
  - Bins and regular collections, to allow for safe disposal of waste, which can often be a point of concern for the settled community. Encampments should also be given information on how to dispose of excess waste or items that cannot go in to bins, e.g. gas bottles. Advice should be provided on safe waste disposal in cases where someone is showing Covid 19 symptoms – i.e. double bagging personal waste and waiting 72 hours before putting out for collection. People may need extra bins to make this feasible in a roadside setting;
- Relevant information should be given about Covid 19 testing, self-isolation and the vaccination programme, including information for anyone who may be at highest clinical risk (previously known as shielding); and
- Engagement with site residents should include a discussion on physical distancing and self-isolation, the use of any shared facilities on the encampment.

## 2.7 Provision for public sites if there is a COVID-19 outbreak

Local Authority sites typically have one amenity block (for toilet, washing and cooking) per pitch, but that pitch may be occupied by two or more trailers of the same family. If someone on a site or camp becomes unwell with Covid-19 symptoms, they and their household need to follow public health advice. By household we mean members of the family who live and eat together, sharing an amenity block/bathroom facilities on the same pitch. Due to the confined living conditions on Gypsy/Traveller camps, support may be needed to do this. The Local Authority may wish to provide support by:

- Offering additional toilets or spread families across pitches, creating two smaller households with separate facilities;
- Engaging with site residents, including a discussion on how provisions for physical distancing and self-isolation can be implemented on the site;
- Giving advice on shared facilities e.g. drawing up a rota for washing or bathing, with the person who is unwell using the facilities last, before cleaning the bathroom themselves, using standard household detergent and disinfectant active against viruses and bacteria;
- Ensuring that there is access to fuel supplies and consider measures that might help to prevent or mitigate the risk of fuel poverty. Support from Home Energy Scotland is detailed at 4.3; and
- Ensuring anyone who is on the highest clinical risk list (previously shielding list) understands the current advice and identifying any support needed.

No-one should be asked to leave a site or camp because someone in the family has fallen ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19. They should be supported to access the relevant services. They should also be supported to share the news of their illness with others on the camp, particularly where there has been contact, so that they can also self-isolate.

### **3. Health Information and Services**

Local Authority officers will have a crucial role in ensuring that Gypsy/Travellers can receive accessible and up to date public health information when they are supporting site residents and roadside encampments.

#### **3.1 Public Health Information**

[NHS Inform](#) provides the most up to date information about COVID-19, including information on when and how to get a test, self-isolation, contact tracing and vaccination, protecting yourself from infection and long Covid.

In particular, the communications toolkit at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/communications-toolkits-and-leaflets/coronavirus-covid-19-communications-toolkit>

Includes advice for different situations and alternative formats such as easy read, audio, and videos on how to carry out tests.

[The Gypsy/Traveller Scotland: Public Information Service Facebook Page](#) includes some materials developed for Gypsy/Travellers and videos recorded by community members

In addition, the Scottish Government publishes any COVID 19 guidance at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#). This includes sections on looking after yourself and others, testing, self-isolation and housing.

#### **3.2 Public Health work with Gypsy/Travellers –**

The Scottish Government and COSLA worked collaboratively with the Scottish Public Health Network, Public Health Scotland and the Third Sector to develop a Gypsy/Traveller communications plan to provide up to date information and address the issues identified below. Work has been undertaken to overcome digital exclusion, working with the Scottish Governments Digital Participation Team to improve digital access, and also work with service providers, particularly NHS and Local Authorities, to ensure their messages are accessible to those unable to access information digitally. We aim to:

- Work with Article 12 to build on the communications work done through the [Gypsy/Traveller Scotland Facebook page](#) and other channels, provide up to date public health messages (physical distancing when back at work, hand washing, face masks etc.), communicated in a way that meets the needs of the community;
- Ensure that there is an ongoing high awareness of symptoms in the Gypsy/Traveller community so that they can take action quickly if needed. This could include advice on what to do and who to contact if there is an outbreak on a camp;
- Communicate arrangements for Test and Protect, i.e. how to access testing and what to expect in terms of contact tracing and isolation as a result of contact with an infected person. This includes 3,000 leaflets specifically for Gypsy/Travellers, distributed to families locally along with information packs on Test and Protect.

- Build on assertive outreach vaccination pilots which have been successful in providing COVID-19 vaccinations to those living on camps, see example in section 6; and
- Support Gypsy/Travellers to register with local GP practices, either as permanent or temporary patients, and to communicate key messages about getting the right care in the right place at the right time.

### 3.3 People at highest clinical risk from COVID-19

There is [information for people at higher risk from coronavirus](#) at mygov.scot. Local Authority resilience partnership leads and leads for those at highest risk have copies of all the relevant information and advice issued by the Chief Medical Officer and Scottish Government. Support can also be accessed through the National Assistance Helpline on 0800 111 4000 which directs callers to their local authority.

For further advice on what information to provide, please contact [p hs.scotphn@p hs.scot](mailto:p hs.scotphn@p hs.scot)

### 3.4 Mental Health Support

A proposal has been agreed to fund a new project, Mental Health Matters, which will support young people in the Gypsy/Traveller community who we know are at greater risk of developing poor mental health. This will ensure that individuals can access the right information, advice and signposting on mental health and wellbeing. This work is being taken forward by third sector organisation MECOPP. MECOPP also established a telephone support service during Covid for community members experiencing either stress, anxiety or low mood, having difficulties in relationships or problems coping with isolation. Details can be found on their website here: <https://www.mecopp.org.uk/gypsytraveller-carers-project>.

### 3.5 Hospital and Health Appointments

The NHS Inform website provides advice on common symptoms, guidance for self-help and where to go if further medical care is needed. For minor illness local community pharmacies should be the first stop. Local community pharmacies can provide advice and treatment for minor illnesses like colds, cold sores, sore throats diarrhoea or constipation, indigestion, and aches and pains through the NHS Pharmacy First Scotland service. No appointment is usually needed and individuals can go to any community pharmacy.

Individuals can contact their local GP practice during the day for an appointment or over-the-phone advice. Outside of GP opening hours, anyone with a health issue should call 111 if they are too ill to wait for their GP practice to open. The public are also asked to call 111 day or night for worsening symptoms of COVID-19 or if they think they need A&E but it is not life threatening.

Those with appointments with healthcare services including hospital out-patients, health visiting and midwifery should have been contacted by their care provider to discuss and arrange support required and future appointments. It is important that GPs and other health and social care services are kept updated about any changes

to people's contact details so that they can be informed about re-arranged healthcare appointments. Everyone has the right to register with a GP in Scotland, for help and support please see: <https://www.healthliteracyplace.org.uk/resources/>

**Hospital visiting** - The latest guidance on hospital visiting can be found here: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): hospital visiting guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/publications/2020/06/20200616-coronavirus-hospital-visiting-guidance/)

**Dental Treatment** - Each person in the family should stick to their own toothbrush and these should be stored apart to prevent infection. It is now possible to access a wider range of NHS dental services. Further information is available here: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Accessing dental services | NHS inform](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus-accessing-dental-services/)

**Community healthcare services** - including Optometry(Opticians) Information on services and any changes to them due to the pandemic is available here: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/your-community-health-care-services>

### 3.6 What to do if someone dies

A Gypsy/Traveller death is mourned by the whole community. It is traditional for families to dress and care for the deceased and this continues in some families today. If someone dies from COVID-19 on a site or in a camp, the Local Authority should tell the family about the steps that they should take to keep themselves safe if they decide to care for their loved one. The Scottish Government's Covid-19 guidance on [staying safe and protecting others](#) includes a section on funeral services and life events, which you may find helpful.

Additionally, guidance published by the UK Government may be useful:

- UK Health Security Agency: [Guidance for the care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed coronavirus](#)
- Health and Safety Executive guidance: [Managing infection risks when handling the deceased](#)

Since there is a small but real risk of transmission from the body of the deceased, any preparations of the deceased should be subject to appropriate mitigations (e.g. the use of PPE) and infection prevention and control procedures. The advice is that mourners should not take part in any rituals or practices that bring them into close contact with the body of an individual who has died from, or with symptoms of, coronavirus (COVID-19) for the duration of the pandemic.

Given the very significant risk for vulnerable and extremely vulnerable people who come into contact with the virus, it is strongly advised that they have no contact with the body. This includes washing, preparing or dressing the body.

If approached to assist the family, a funeral director should seek to safely fulfil their requests. However, subject to an appropriate risk assessment, and if it is the view of the funeral director that these requests cannot be safely fulfilled, then a sensitive discussion will need to take place with the family. We understand how important funeral services are to those who are grieving, and recognise how important it is to have the support of loved ones.



## **4 Food, fuel and wider assistance**

All aspects of local resilience plans will need to take account of the needs of Gypsy/Travellers, for example in relation to support for people at risk of poverty and services for children and families as well as the provision of health and social care. Particular pressures over winter may impact on income and employment opportunities.

### **4.1 Finances**

Gypsy/Travellers may need additional support or advice to help them to access any benefits they are entitled to or other forms of financial relief provided by either the UK or Scottish Government, including self-isolation grants where these are available and local support such as the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF). Local authorities continue to provide a vital safety net to people facing financial insecurity including through the SWF – with over £30m paid out to support people in need from April to November 2021. Additionally, the £41m Winter Support Fund includes £25 million flexible funding to local authorities to support wellbeing by tackling financial insecurity. Local authorities have flexibility to meet emerging local needs, with guidance providing a strong steer in favour of cash-first responses.

Support and money advice can be accessed from community and local authority advice services as well as agencies supported by the Scottish Government such as Stepchange, Money Advice Trust, Christians Against Poverty, Citizens Advice Scotland and Advice Direct Scotland.

### **4.2 Food**

The Scottish Government invested over £140m in tackling food insecurity during the first year of the pandemic, including providing local authorities with £70 million flexible funding to tackle food and financial insecurity. Guidance highlighted that local partners may use resource from their Food Fund allocation to support households that are marginalised, which includes Gypsy/Travellers, noting that community organisations that already provide support to people in this category may be well placed to provide this as part of a coordinated approach. From November 2021 to January 2022, The Scottish Government consulted on a national plan to end the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity. The draft plan reaffirms our human rights approach – we prioritise action to prevent poverty and promote cash-first responses to hardship so that people have sufficient income to meet their needs and preferences. We know that submissions on behalf of Gypsy/Traveller households and communities have been made to this consultation and anticipate that the final version of this plan will recognise and reflect the views put forward.

When designing local responses to address food insecurity, it is important that Local Authorities make sure that these responses consider the needs of Gypsy/Travellers, who may not be engaged with local services and so may not be aware of hardship supports like the Scottish Welfare Fund, money advice services and food provision.

Households may also need more frequent help or advice on storing supplies that they may need to self-isolate or physically distance, if there is not enough space to store these within their home.

### **4.3 Fuel and Fuel Poverty**

Gypsy/Travellers are at high risk of fuel poverty and may struggle to top up electricity meters during this period. Home Energy Scotland can provide support to residents who are struggling with their fuel bills and are working in partnership with MECOPP to provide assistance, including facilitating same-day support to top up prepayment meters in the event of imminent disconnection. They offer free and impartial advice, funded by the Scottish Government, and they have the latest information from energy suppliers and the government. If any residents are struggling, please encourage them to call free on 0808 808 2282, visit [homeenergyscotland.org](http://homeenergyscotland.org) for help or discuss this support further with MECOPP Gypsy/Traveller Carers' Project who can access support on their behalf.

### **4.4 Domestic Gender Based Violence**

Cultural sensitivities around lifestyle choices and privacy should be recognised at all times when communicating with Gypsy/Traveller women in relation to gender based violence (GBV). The negative impact of misconceptions around GBV within the community should be challenged and care taken not to infer stereotypes of Gypsy/Traveller women as victims or men as being dominant or aggressive.

Within NHS Scotland, Routine Enquiry about abuse takes place in the following settings, maternity, sexual health, health visiting, substance misuse and mental health. Recently there has been a programme of work to support the use of the DASH Risk Identification Checklist. This is a structured validated tool designed to identify people at high risk or serious or lethal harm in the context of domestic abuse.

Officers should consider appropriate methods of developing supportive conversation and giving discrete information around safety planning and specialised helplines. Literacy levels, feelings of failure as a mother and wife, fear of rejection within her community or of others within the community dealing with the violence internally may present as barriers to engagement or disclosure from women.

COSLA and Scottish Government have developed a joint COVID-19-Supplementary VAW Guidance for Local Authorities. Cross reference should be made to this guidance. COSLA will be considering the guidance further to ensure that women and children vulnerable to domestic abuse from the Gypsy/Traveller communities are more visible within it:

[https://www.cosla.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0023/17762/COVID-19-Supplementary-VAW-Guidance-FINAL.pdf](https://www.cosla.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/17762/COVID-19-Supplementary-VAW-Guidance-FINAL.pdf)

Scotland's National Domestic Abuse Helpline is available 24/7/365 - 0800 027 1234 – and web and email services can be accessed at: <https://sdafmh.org.uk/contact-us/>.

#### **4.5 Education - Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP)**

[STEP Families website](#) supports Gypsy/Traveller families to continue with young people's education while staying at home. The site contains a range of culturally-relevant learning activities. There are also links to Local Authority staff in all areas and information on gaining digital access to education.

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

#### **4.6 Young Gypsy/Travellers**

Article 12 works with Young Gypsy/Travellers and is undertaking additional work to enable young Gypsy/Travellers' and their families engaging with Gypsy/Traveller education services to continue to maintain contact during the COVID-19 restrictions.

<https://www.article12.org/>

MECOPP also has a young carers worker who provides support to young people with caring responsibilities in the Gypsy/Traveller community.

#### **4.7 Reporting Hate Crimes**

Communities and individuals may feel vulnerable as a result of COVID-19 and Police Scotland continue to urge victims and witnesses of hate crime to report it.

A hate crime can include name calling, harassment, graffiti or a physical attack motivated by prejudice or ill-will towards a social group. Social groups covered by hate crime legislation are disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender identity. What you may view as a minor incident can have a major impact. Anyone who experiences or witnesses such an incident, should be encouraged to report it by calling 101, or 999 in an emergency, or by using the [online hate crime reporting form](#) on the Police Scotland website.

If they do not feel comfortable reporting the matter directly to Police, there is a network of Third Party Reporting (TPR) Centres available to provide support remotely during the current situation. Although, at the moment, people cannot attend a TPR centre in person, many organisations are now offering an option to report an incident over the telephone or via e-mail. Please visit the TPR page of the Police Scotland website for more information on [Third Party Reporting](#) and for a list of active centres.

#### **4.8 Gypsy/Traveller Scotland: Public Information Service Facebook Page**

This moderated [Facebook page](#) is endorsed by COSLA and the Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, Article 12, MECOPP and STEP.

The Facebook page should be promoted as a source of up to date information, including videos recorded by community members on particular issues. It can also be a way of gathering feedback about issues and difficulties the community is facing. This may also be a route for communicating with Gypsy/Travellers in a specific area or region. If you would like to use the page please contact [dominique@COSLA.gov.uk](mailto:dominique@COSLA.gov.uk)

## **5. Examples of Support in Practice During Lockdown**

During the lockdown period, different Local Authorities have used the Framework to develop approaches that meet local needs. Some examples are set out below:

### **Example 1: Dundee**

One Local Authority is using the framework to support a roadside encampment in the area. The land the encampment is on is privately owned and normally the landowner would look to take court action to move encampments on. Referring to the framework, the Local Authority negotiated with the landowner and were able to encourage the encampment to stay as per lockdown guidelines. Portaloos, showers, drinking water, weekly food parcels and refuge collections have been provided. To allay concerns about catching the virus, while out locally for essentials, masks and gloves have been provided to the encampment through the “Health Box” funding.

The framework has been used to include the community in the local emergency response and has kept them at the forefront of any decisions the Local Authority is making about additional support required for the local community in general. The regular contact and support provided has enabled a greater level of engagement with a group who return to the area on an annual basis. The Local Authority are hopeful that in future years, the ground work and support that has been offered will continue to encourage positive relationships with the group.

### **Example 2: Dumfries & Galloway**

Another Local Authority has used the framework to inform their operational approach for the permanent Gypsy/Traveller sites they provide and to facilitate additional support in terms of food parcels, financial assistance and welfare support. The framework also informed processes to create an environment to support self-isolation and social distancing and the capacity of the sites has been temporarily reduced to allow families to maintain safe distancing.

The Local Authority was pro-active in implementing procedures to ensure they were able to support Gypsy/Travellers during the pandemic. It was quickly recognised that there would be a negative impact on household income and financial resilience. Actions identified to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the Gypsy/Traveller community included:

- Maintaining a consistent single point of contact through the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer (GTLO). This provides families with a consistent Local Authority presence and ensures any concerns or additional support needs are addressed as they arise
- Suspending electricity charges for a period extending up to 3 months
- Suspending pitch fees for a period extending up to 3 months
- Ensuring effective support is available for the most vulnerable on sites and those who are on the shielding list
- Providing access to support organisations and facilitating delivery of essential provision
- Maintained sufficient free space on site to allow families to ‘spread’ out and improve the ability for social distancing.

- Providing up-dated information to residents in relation to COVID-19.
- Identifying a suitable location where we could effectively support families living roadside without access to essential facilities

### **Example 3: Scottish Borders**

One Local Authority worked with a local caravan park that had closed, due to lockdown, to reopen it for the benefit of 4 Gypsy/Traveller families living roadside. This enabled the provision of separate portable toilets for each caravan, shower facilities, electric hook-ups, free electricity, rubbish bins and clean running water.

### **Example 4: East Ayrshire**

A Local Authority, that had already agreed to pilot Negotiated Stopping and therefore having had measures in place to support basic provisions to encampments, identified a local suitable hard-standing area for Gypsy/Travellers who needed to self-isolate. The Scottish Government provided portaloos for use at the site and these are serviced twice weekly. Where families on an encampment were experiencing financial difficulties it was agreed that “health boxes” would be provided alongside the basic provisions of water, portaloos and regular waste collection. It was also agreed that as the Local Authority does not have a permanent site, temporary bricks and mortar accommodation would be offered to families living on roadside encampments if this was preferable.

### **Example 5: Moray**

The Local Authorities Unauthorised Encampments Officer (UEO) has been visiting the encampments on a weekly basis. Each visit consists of ensuring the residents awareness of up to date restrictions regarding Covid-19 and checking clarity and identifying any vulnerable or infected people within the encampment. As per the guidance, information has been supplied on shielding, social distancing, information contained on the NHS inform website, and the Gypsy/Traveller Covid impact Facebook page allowing the encampment to make decisions and adhere to positioning of caravans and removal of waste.

Toilets have been provided to encampments and bins have been issued through LA’s waste services team and are uplifted on a regular basis.

Identification of suitable land was carried out by the UEO, reducing conflict with the settled community and allowing better access to the provision of facilities.

Discussion around provision of temporary accommodation/housing options advice, financial help (via Scottish welfare fund) and education materials took place.

### **Example 6: Perth and Kinross**

During the pandemic Perth and Kinross Council fully embraced supporting the gypsy traveller communities both on our own sites, private sites and on unauthorised encampments. This included welfare check calls, the provision of coal, logs, electrical and gas top ups where residents were self-isolating. Through working in

partnership with Connecting Scotland we have been able to secure devices with 24 months of data provided to support residents to become digitally included.

In response to a COVID positive situation on a private site which also included an unauthorised encampment, a dedicated multi-agency group was established. This included representation from Housing, Environment, Education and Children's Services, Social Work, Community Learning and Development and third sector agencies such as MECCOP. Through a detailed Action Plan, the Group delivered a tailored package of support to the residents which included the provision of additional sanitation facilities, access to services and support from healthcare, including assistance with covid testing and accessing vaccinations. Residents were also provided with a single point of contact who linked in with the multi-agency group to ensure any new support needs or issues were quickly addressed.

We have had several large unauthorised encampments within Perth and Kinross throughout the pandemic and a similar approach to that outlined earlier has been taken. Dedicated officers continue to maintain contact with residents, and we have provided any support required to enable residents to stick to the "stay put" message, for example access to bottled water and access to shower facilities where needed. Regular contact is maintained with all unauthorised encampments.

### **Example 7: Vaccination – Assertive Outreach Programme**

NHS Forth Valley COVID-19 Vaccination Team worked in partnership with the Scottish Ambulance Service and their three Local Authorities: Clackmannanshire Council, Falkirk Council and Stirling Council to deliver the COVID-19 vaccination to homeless people, Gypsy/Travellers and asylum/refugee communities. Across a three-day period, the mobile vaccination unit was set-up at four locations. Staff reached out to eligible individuals and liaised with support workers to share information, arrange appointments and support attendance. Individuals were CHI matched (or CHI generated) and were preloaded to the Turas Vaccine Management Tool prior to the session. Drop-in was also allowed each day which enabled the team to vaccinate some individuals opportunistically.

Over the course of the three days, 105 individuals were vaccinated; four new GP registrations were facilitated; 11 Take-Home-Naloxone kits were distributed; urgent Mental Health support was arranged; and people were signposted to services such as Foodbanks, Addiction Support and Financial Aid.

The project identified that, out of those vaccinated, only 29.5% would have attended for vaccination following receipt of the national vaccination invitation letter whilst 6% refused the offer of the vaccine due to beliefs about AstraZeneca or 5G.

Whilst both the attendance rates and engagement on each of the days were really positive and higher than anticipated, many barriers and challenges were encountered, these included:

#### **Population Barriers**

- No fixed address/transient populations;
- No GP registration or CHI number;
- Ability to give informed consent;
- Preconceived beliefs and ideologies;

- Language and literacy barriers;
- Inability to cope with 'mainstream' vaccination centres.

### **NHS Board Challenges**

- Competing staff workloads from different sectors and organisations;
- Planning for 2nd dose delivery and need to link with other boards /services to account for movement;
- Public perception - although external communication about the project was minimised, some local people were unhappy about it.

### **Key Learning**

- The need to define relevant stakeholders early on and ensure clear requests with return dates;
- To utilise the strong relationships shared between Service Users and their Support/Key Workers to facilitate information;
- To ensure information is available in a variety of formats and languages;
- To consider ways in which we can adapt our larger vaccination hubs to best accommodate the needs of our local populations such as quieter hours and more flexible appointment options;
- The importance of gaining the trust of community leaders (official and perceived) to help disperse information and encourage uptake;
- The platforms we use for sharing information - for example, TikTok was found to be the most popular source for finding information in relation to COVID-19, so the consideration of tailoring our communication efforts to reflect this;
- The importance of taking the opportunity to gather feedback and input from communities about the vaccination programme and how to ensure it is as patient-centred as possible.

### **Example 8: Framework to guide response of local Infection Management Teams to support Gypsy/Travellers**

#### **Introduction**

This framework, developed by the ScotPHN team at Public Health Scotland, is to assist local IMTs to plan and support Gypsy/Traveller's living on public, private and roadside camps to improve consistency of response to positive COVID-19 cases across Scotland. A consistent response would provide confidence to the community. Gypsy/Traveller Contacts for each Local Authority can be requested from [dominique@cosla.gov.uk](mailto:dominique@cosla.gov.uk). A draft template to assist further with planning and guiding a response is at Appendix 1 (this is based on a template developed by Perth & Kinross)

#### **Identification**

- Due to the stigma and discrimination many Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland experience they less likely to disclose their identity during the Test & Protect process
- Contact tracers can use postcodes to identify those living on public sites, see addresses below

- Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officers (GTLO) are trusted and well-known to the community; GTLO may well know which Travellers, in their local area, have tested positive for COVID-19. See below for a list of GTLO.

### **Leadership and Support**

- Each Health Protection Team (HPT) should identify a lead for Gypsy/Travellers; this lead should make themselves known to the GTLO and local primary care teams where sites are located. They should be familiar with this guidance, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-supporting-gypsy-traveller-communities/>
- The HPT lead should understand the importance of respecting the community's right to privacy, as well as understanding the importance of family life and people's fears around illness. For more information they should complete the short TURAS e-learning module 'Raising Awareness of Gypsy/Traveller communities'.
- The HPT lead should work closely with a trusted intermediary, possibly the GTLO or third sector representative to ensure anyone living on a site who tests positive is able to follow Test & Protect guidance and knows about any support they may need including financial grants, gloves, aprons, face-masks, disinfectant etc.
- The HPT lead should offer site visits, brokered by trusted intermediaries; these visits would identify what support the community might want, as well as providing further information about Test & Protect, self-isolation and FACTS if required.
- Where possible those visiting the sites should already be familiar to those who live there, e.g. Keep Well, health visiting or local primary care teams
- Contact number/s (in hours and out of hours) should be provided to the community so that they can call someone for information and advice, especially if they start to feel more unwell. It is important to offer people the choice of face to face communication, or by phone; don't rely on providing information digitally.

### **Appendix 1 to Example 8**

### **Template**

#### **Purpose of template:**

To ensure that community members impacted (where known) receive support, advice and assistance in relation to isolation requirements and that where required any financial, welfare, health and well-being or accommodation needs are met in the short, medium and long term as required.

#### **Risks/Issues:**

**Risk 1:** There is a risk that our approach to supporting community members has the potential to stigmatise the individual group and cause or add to any community tensions

**Risk 2:** The current Test and Protect system approach – where an individual has been identified as being in “close contact” with a confirmed case - they are issued with a text message asking them to contact the National Contact Centre and agree



to their information being shared with the Local Authority. There is a perceived or identified lack of trust between the identified community and statutory bodies like Local Authorities and the NHS. Generally, all community groups will be reluctant to answer a telephone call from an unknown number. However, this is heightened within the specific community group and there is a real risk therefore that we will not be able to fully understand the impact of the pandemic and more importantly support the community group.

**Risk 3:** The inability to have access to impacted household information, means that we are unable to undertake a targeted welfare approach and are reliant on the individual household members agreeing to their data being shared.

**Risk 4:** There are additional potential inequality issues which have been identified which could include:

- Literacy
- Mistrust/distrust of authorities (perceived and/or reality),
- Limited access/capability around digital means (that barrier could be reinforced in current times with remote set ups etc),
- Limited access to banking/online (again could be an issue for self-isolation and could pose a risk),
- Less favourable working conditions (self-employment/cash in hand work/zero hours work), may feel the pressure to continue working etc.

**Risk 5:** Given the current 5-tier system in place across Scotland there is a risk that existing support networks for example MECOPP will not be able to travel to support the community.

Purpose / Desired Outcomes	Key Actions	Comments on progress
To ensure that community members have up to date information on COVID-19, support available, relevant contact avenues and in particular track and trace		
To ensure that those identified through the existing test and protect system are provided with a more in-depth welfare check		
Supporting households to self-isolate within unauthorised/roadside encampments		
To ensure those individuals required to self-isolate are aware of support available		
For those households included on the track and trace list to provided direct contact to undertake welfare checks		
Potential for an increase in confirmed cases within the community		

To determine if ratio, distance of residents to and access to facilities is appropriate for infection control and meets Scottish Government Guidance.		
Concern re potential for community tension		
Need to ensure messaging and general approach to incident does not single out or identify the community involved at all levels within all organisations		
Concern as to potential for adherence to lock-down restrictions by community in relation to attendance at funerals		
Need to ensure there is a clear link and dialogue with Public Health to allow us to respond effectively		
Need to ensure messaging, language and general approach to incident does not single out the community involved		
Need to ensure any communication being issued does not conflict with any information being shared by ECS		
Ensure that all staff involved in any community response are suitably trained/skilled		
Potential escalation of community tension		

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