

Policy H16 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

I am a 16 year old Irish Traveller living on a site, in a caravan in Bow. If I was forced to live in a house I feel like I would be caged in and out of my comfort zone. I would have mental health issues and feel more scared to live there.

It is much harder for our children to live the way of life if they live in houses. Gypsies and Travellers children can learn from each other and play in and out of the caravans and our men can get work because there are working together. We watch our children play and watch them learn from one another by putting us in a house we cannot live in the same way. This is our way of life.

By leaving it up to the councils to give us more sites we are never going to get them because to the councils we don't matter and they never listen to us. I would love to have more sites built, the councils are not giving us more sites. They instead are taking our identity away from us. We are lower on the list than the students, they are listened to but we are not.

The mayor we should put more pressure on the councils so they include us and count us. We all feel like we don't count and that they don't want to help us. It actually feels like they want to hide us. They force us off in houses and we feel caged and scared to walk out of our front door.

Gypsies and Travellers we learn from each other and guide each other and we can't do that when we are in a house. We love each other because we are family and friends, we have large extended families. We have lived together like this since childhood.

As the Mayor of London I wish you could see us and count us. We need more pitches, our home is London just like so many other communities and we live on sites, these are our homes. I hope you listen to us and build more sites.

Yours sincerely