

UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS PROCEDURE ON COUNCIL OWNED OR ADMINISTERED LAND

- 1 For the purpose of this policy “Traveller” means persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, who wander or travel but does not include members of an organised group, travelling showmen or of persons engaged in travelling circuses, travelling together as such.
- 2 Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised under the Human Rights Act as ethnic minorities against whom discrimination is unlawful. Herefordshire Council recognises its duty under the Human Rights Act in compiling this procedure.
- 3 Subject to the satisfactory assessment of the following factors, Herefordshire Council will not normally pursue an order for the removal of vehicles or persons, from any land on which they are stationed for a period of no less than 14 days. All Travellers will receive an assessment of their welfare needs if they are on site or able to be contacted during normal office hours when visited. The assessment will include needs in relation to, health, education, accommodation and general welfare. Any matters raised which require specialist referral will be signposted to the most appropriate agency or department.
- 4 Travellers, will normally be allowed to stay on sites when the following conditions are met:
 - The maximum acceptable will be 3 caravans or motorhomes or other moveable dwellings such as tents or benders in any one group although slightly larger groups may be permissible in locations remote from residential or commercial premises.
 - The distance between groups of Travellers shall be distinct as determined by officers of the Gypsies and Traveller's Service.
 - The occupation of any land shall not have a serious effect on the amenities or otherwise cause nuisance to, the occupants of any adjacent property.
 - No damage shall be caused to any property, fences, trees etc. on that or adjacent land.
 - The behaviour of the Travellers to other people shall be acceptable i.e. no intimidation especially where this constitutes a hazard to public health, nor any stockpiling of materials.
 - No fires shall be lit on any land.
 - Vehicles shall be parked, and any animals kept, in such a manner to not cause any inconvenience or affect the safety of users of the adjacent or nearest highway.

- The occupation of local authority or other statutory authority land or agricultural land shall not impede its necessary operational use or, insofar as parkland or other public open space is concerned, shall not detract from its amenity value.
- Once the agreed period of occupation has elapsed then the distance moved must be a least two miles from the site occupied. Re-occupation of the same site must not take place within three months.

5 In turn the Council will:

- Provide refuse sacks
- Will identify places where water supplies can be accessed. This may be shops or water taps known to be available and owned by the Council.
- Will inform all appropriate Statutory Bodies, the Gypsy Traveller Education Service of the existence of the encampment if appropriate.

6 Eviction will be sought through the relevant Court if the unauthorised encampment does not leave by the agreed time and date. The Council will seek to recover any clear up or damage costs associated with the encampment at the same Court hearing.

7 The Council will not secure evictions from private land. This must be undertaken by the landowner or person responsible for the land.

8 Where the Council takes enforcement action in relation to Council owned land, the action will be determined by the Service Manager for Licensing, Travellers, Pest Control and Technical Support.