



14/07/2025

Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP

Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Re: Redbourn Site Fire: Urgent Call for National Action on Traveller Accommodation and Housing Justice

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

I am writing to express our deep alarm following the catastrophic fire at the Redbourn Road Traveller site in Hertfordshire (AL3 6LB), which has left multiple families traumatised, displaced, and without homes. Some of those affected are directly connected to the Traveller Movement team.

This is not an isolated incident, it is the predictable and preventable result of a long-standing systemic failure of government policy at both local and national levels.

Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers continue to be denied access to safe, legal, and dignified accommodation. Despite decades of advocacy, repeated warnings from experts, and clear recommendations from charities and parliamentary committees, successive governments have failed to deliver a national, coordinated, and properly resourced strategy for Traveller accommodation.

Instead, what we see is the steady erosion of rights and protections. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 has criminalised families with nowhere else to go. Local authorities face no meaningful pressure or enforcement to meet their statutory duties. Accommodation Needs Assessments are routinely flawed, outdated, or completely ignored, with no oversight and no consequence for non-compliance. This lack of accountability and ambition has created a dangerous vacuum.

The Redbourn site, like many others, had long-standing safety and overcrowding concerns. These had been raised locally, including by journalists from Traveller



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Times, Nothing was done. Instead of improving conditions, families were left in unacceptable risk and now they are suffering the consequences.

We are also deeply concerned about the planned mass eviction of up to 70 Traveller families in Brent London, where residents have been living in overcrowded conditions with no investment and serious fire safety risks. These families are now being punished with eviction rather than protected with housing solutions. This is not just a housing failure, it is a safeguarding failure.

Across the country, Traveller sites are in crisis: unsafe, underfunded, and subject to forced eviction without viable alternatives. These conditions would not be tolerated for any other community. The state's failure to provide adequate accommodation or even meet minimum

Deputy Prime Minister, it is time to let the drawbridge down. Rhetorical support is not enough, we need urgent political will and meaningful action.

We are calling on you and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to:

1. **Introduce an immediate national moratorium on Traveller evictions**, particularly where no adequate alternative provision exists and where enforcement poses a risk to health, safety, or family life.
2. **Commit to a fully funded national Traveller accommodation strategy**, with clear targets, timelines, enforcement mechanisms, and oversight.
3. **Reform the Accommodation Needs Assessment process** to ensure it is accurate, transparent, and independently reviewed.
4. **Invest in the development and refurbishment of public and private Traveller sites** that are safe, sustainable, and designed with community input.
5. **Reverse the criminalising impacts of the PCSC Act 2022**, and restore a civil approach to engagement and resolution.
6. **Ensure local authority compliance** with their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.

We also request an urgent meeting with you and your officials to discuss this matter directly. We are ready to work collaboratively with colleagues from across the sector, affected families, and other partners, to bring forward solutions grounded in justice, rights, and lived experience.

Later this year, as part of our Dignity Campaign, the Traveller Movement will launch a short film made by and with residents of an Irish Traveller site in London. This film documents in real terms the consequences of policy failure how it breaks communities, destroys hope, and undermines futures. The situation at Redbourn is yet another chapter in that story. But it doesn't have to be the next.

Housing justice is a fundamental right. It is time to stop the evictions, end the cycle of exclusion, and build a future where Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers have access to safe, secure, and culturally appropriate accommodation.

We urge you to act now and to act decisively.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yvonne MacNamara'.

Yvonne MacNamara
Chief Executive Officer
Traveller Movement

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pauline Melvin-Anderson OBE'.

Pauline Melvin-Anderson OBE
Chair
Traveller Movement