



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Statistical release

Housing

Count of Traveller Caravans, July 2021 England

All comparisons refer to year-on-year changes to reflect the overall trend rather than seasonal fluctuations. For this statistical release (July 2021), comparisons have been made against July 2019 due to the July 2020 count being cancelled. It should be noted that comparisons over this two year period are likely to see a larger change than previous releases which make comparisons over a one year period. Additionally, whilst national lockdown restrictions had been lifted before the July 2021 count took place, Covid-19 is likely to have impacted traveller movements.

In this release:

- Overall, the number of traveller caravans have increased since the last count in July 2019. The total number of traveller caravans in England in July 2021 was 24,203. This is 770 (3 per cent) more than the 23,433 reported in July 2019.
- The growth in number of caravans has been led mainly by a rise in the number of Private caravans (with permanent planning permission), resulting in an increase in the total authorised caravans despite a decrease in socially rented caravans.
- The number of caravans on authorised privately funded sites was 14,785. This was 1,183 more (9 per cent) than the 13,602 recorded in July 2019.
- The number of caravans on authorised socially rented sites was 6,395. This is a decrease of 323 (5 per cent) since the July 2019 count, which recorded 6,718.
- Overall, the July 2021 count indicated that 88 per cent of traveller caravans in England were on authorised land and that 12 per cent were on unauthorised land.
- The number of unauthorised caravans has decreased since July 2019, with this decrease stemming from a decline in caravans on sites on land not owned by Travellers, counteracting a slight increase in the number of unauthorised caravans on sites on Travellers' own land.

- The number of caravans on unauthorised developments on land owned by travellers was 2,316. This is an increase of 238 (11 per cent) compared to the July 2019 figure of 2,078.
- The number of caravans on unauthorised encampments on land not owned by travellers was 707. This was 328 caravans fewer (32 per cent) than the July 2019 count of 1,035.

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Introduction

This statistical release presents official statistics on the count of traveller caravans in England. The count is carried out to provide local data on the number and seasonal movement of caravans and trends over time.

This publication is compiled from information submitted by local authorities in England. Local authorities carry out the count of caravans on traveller sites twice a year, in January and July, providing a snapshot of the number of caravans on the day of the count. Information is collected about caravans on authorised socially rented sites, authorised privately funded sites, unauthorised developments (sites on land owned by travellers for which planning permission has not been granted) and unauthorised encampments (sites on land not owned by travellers and which do not have planning permission).

The traveller caravan count covers data on the number of caravans and traveller sites in England; it does not cover the number of occupants residing in these caravans or caravan sites or the potential drivers for any observed change.

The count takes place twice a year to reflect winter residence and summer travelling trends. All comparisons refer to year-on-year changes in order that changes between counts reflect the overall trend rather than seasonal fluctuations. For this statistical release (July 2021), comparisons have been made against July 2019 due to the July 2020 count being cancelled. It should be noted that comparisons over this two year period are likely to see a larger change than previous releases which make comparisons over a one year period. Additionally, whilst national lockdown restrictions had been lifted before the July 2021 count took place, Covid-19 is likely to have impacted traveller movements.

The information in this release is based on data returned to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by local authorities in England. Users should note that revisions may have been made to figures from previous counts in this release as a result of updated data being received. This release presents the most accurate data on the number of traveller caravans in England and the accompanying live tables should be used for historic comparisons.

Further information is given in five accompanying live tables, which can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/traveller-caravan-count-july-2021>

Changes to this release

A review of recent counts suggested that the England total was being moderately underestimated through the exclusion of authorities who had not submitted data in recent years¹. To ensure that we have the best national estimate we have revised the England level totals have been revised to include imputed figures for those authorities who have not provided data for the previous 3 or more counts. The inclusion of such authorities results in a 3 per cent increase in the England estimate for January 2020 for example. See the accompanying technical note for more detail.

Count of Traveller Caravans

Local authorities carried out the July 2021 count on or around 22 July 2021. Aggregated totals by site type are presented in Table 1 below, together with comparative figures from the previous two July counts. At the time of the July 2021 count, the total number of traveller caravans in England was 24,203. Of these 6,395 (26 per cent) were on socially rented sites; 14,785 (61 per cent) were on privately funded sites; 2,317 (10 per cent) were unauthorised developments on land owned by travellers; and 707 (3 per cent) were unauthorised encampments on land not owned by travellers. This information is also illustrated in Figure 1 below and in accompanying Live Table 1.

¹ Previously, authorities who had not responded for the previous three counts had been assumed to be zero in the published tables, however the exclusion of such authorities from the national is increasingly problematic in light of continued non-response from some larger authorities, as well as low response rates following the covid-19 pandemic.

Table 1: Number of Traveller Caravans by site type, England

	July-18	July-19	July-21	% of total caravans (July 2021)	Change from July 2019 to July 2021	% Change from July 2019 to July 2021
Caravans on Authorised sites (with planning permission)	19,686	20,320	21,180	88%	860	4%
Socially Rented Caravans	6,642	6,718	6,395	26%	-323	-5%
Private Caravans	13,044	13,602	14,785	61%	1,183	9%
Temporary Planning Permission	402	467	432	2%	-35	-7%
Permanent Planning Permission	12,642	13,135	14,353	59%	1,218	9%
Caravans on Unauthorised Sites (without planning permission)	3,108	3,113	3,023	12%	-90	-3%
Caravans on sites on Traveller's own land	2,164	2,078	2,316	10%	238	11%
Tolerated	1,068	915	965	4%	50	5%
Not Tolerated	1,096	1,163	1,351	6%	188	16%
Caravans on sites not on Traveller's own land	944	1,035	707	3%	-328	-32%
Tolerated	301	327	186	1%	-141	-43%
Not Tolerated	643	708	521	2%	-187	-26%
Overall Total	22,794	23,433	24,203	100%	770	3%

1. Note that the July 2020 count was cancelled due to the covid-19 pandemic.

The total number of traveller caravans in England has risen from 18,723 in July 2011 to 24,203 in July 2021, an increase of 29 per cent. The growth in number of caravans has been led mainly by a rise in the number of Private caravans (with permanent planning permission), resulting in an increase in the total authorised caravans despite a decrease in socially rented caravans. However, this increase has not been consistent year-on-year. Figure 1 illustrates that the number of caravans on authorised private sites has increased over the same period, with 8,086 private caravans recorded in 2011 compared to a total of 14,785 in 2021. Figure 2 below shows that caravans on authorised private sites accounted for the largest proportion of the total number of caravans across England in July 2021 (61 per cent). Caravans on unauthorised sites accounted for 12 per cent of the total with caravans on authorised socially rented sites accounting for 29 per cent. The underlying figures are included in accompanying Live Table 4.

Figure 1: Number of Traveller Caravans reported in July count by site type over time, England

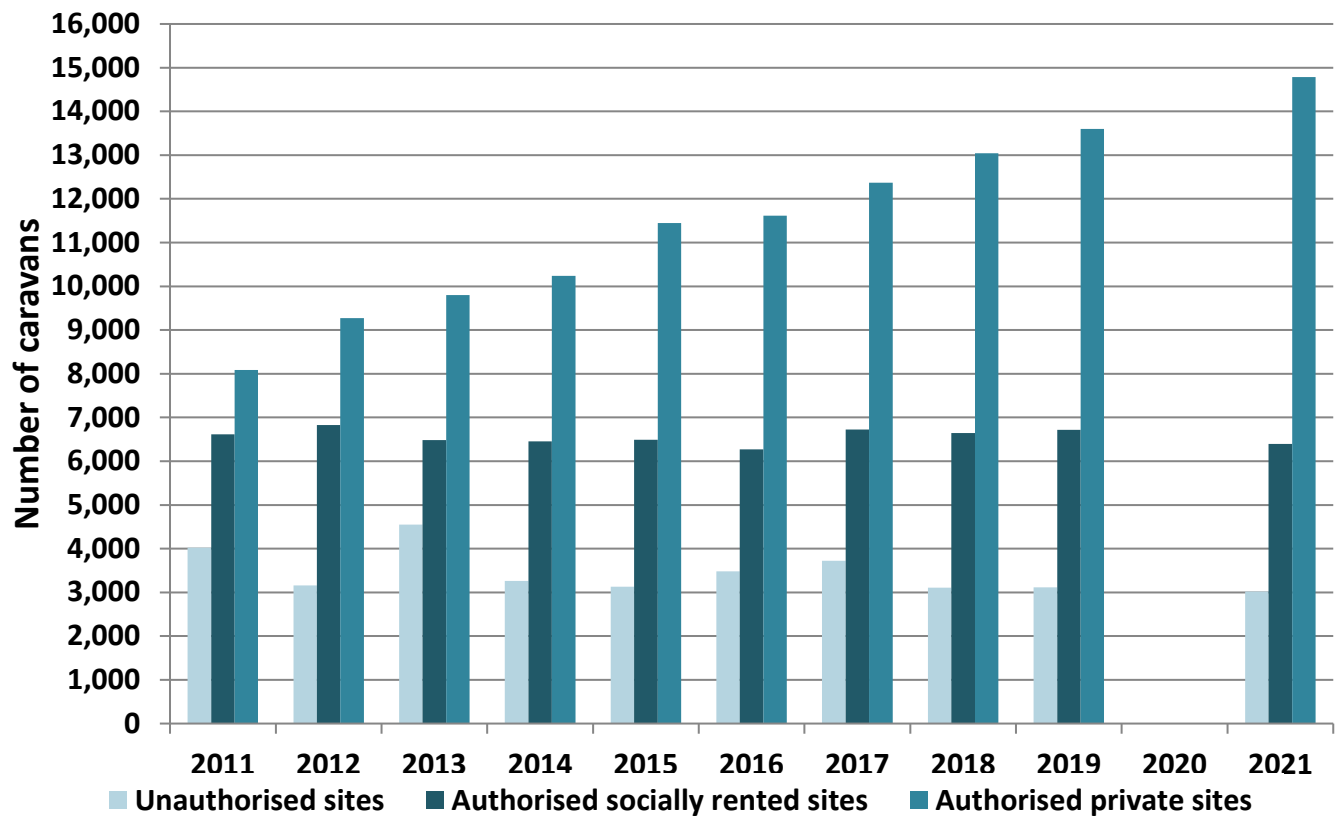
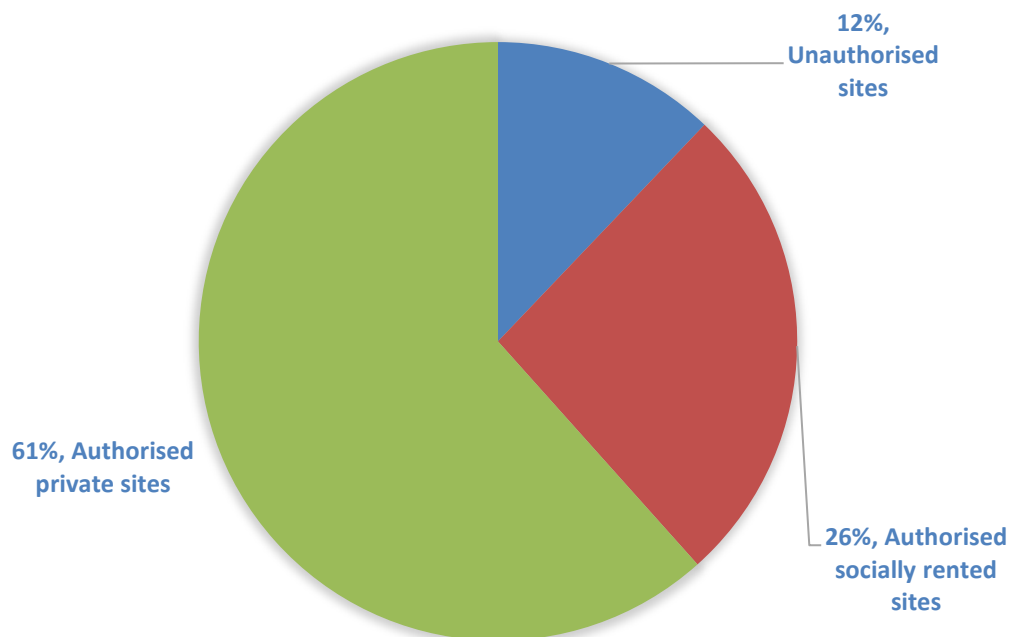


Figure 2: Proportion of Traveller Caravans reported in July 2021 by site type, England



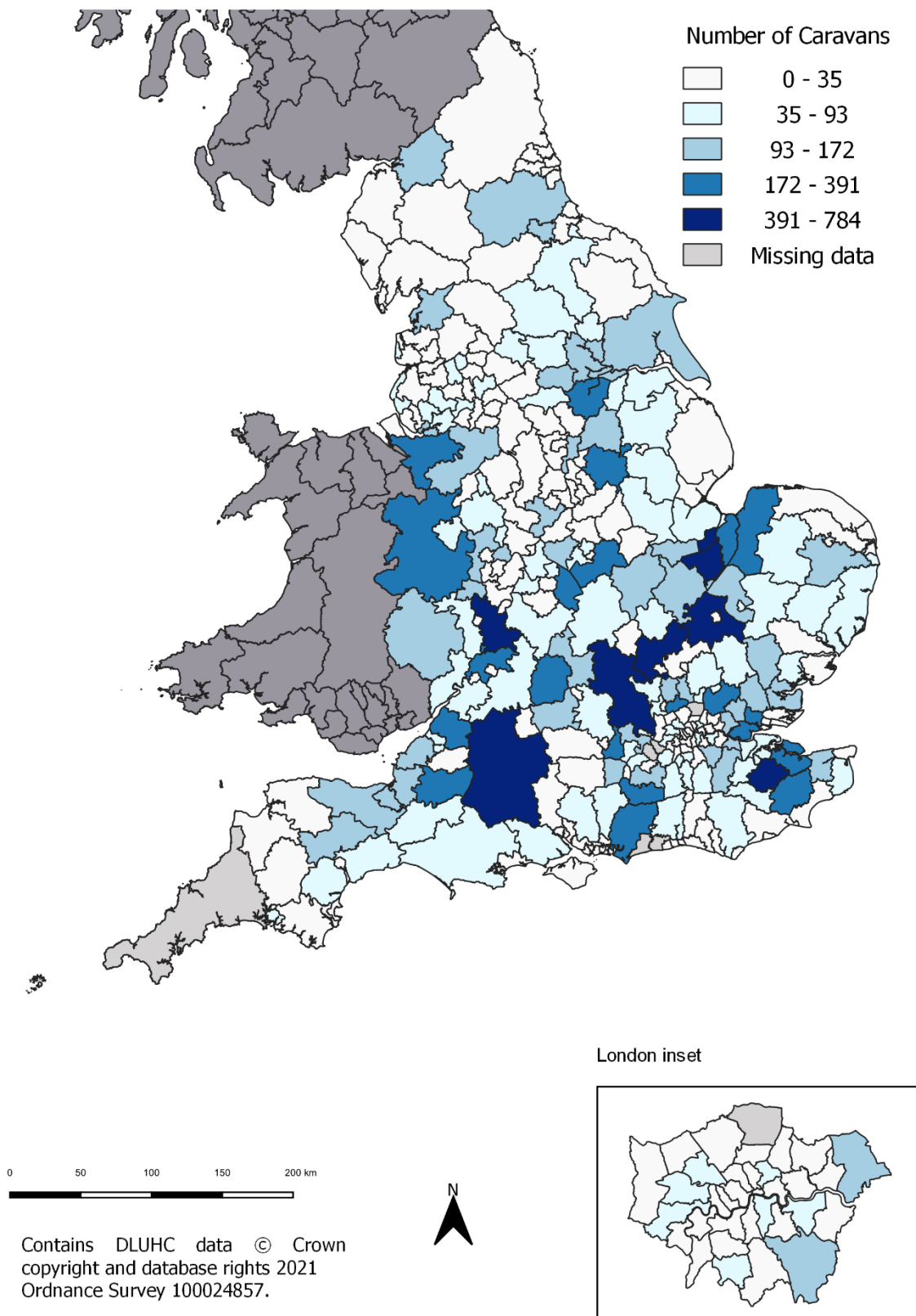
Geographic distribution

The geographic distribution of traveller caravans varies across England. Map 1 below shows the total number of caravans on authorised sites within each local authority boundary.

The data has been grouped into five categories for the purposes of mapping using the Jenks natural breaks classification method. This method splits the data into intervals based on the natural groupings observed within. The class breaks identified work to minimise the variance or difference between individual cases selected in each group whilst also maximising the variances between each group taken as a whole. Maps created using this method allow trends in the underlying data to be accurately represented, aiding interpretation and further analysis.

As indicated in the key, darker colours represent those local authorities that have reported a higher number of total caravans on authorised sites whereas lighter colours indicate local authorities that have reported lower numbers of caravans.

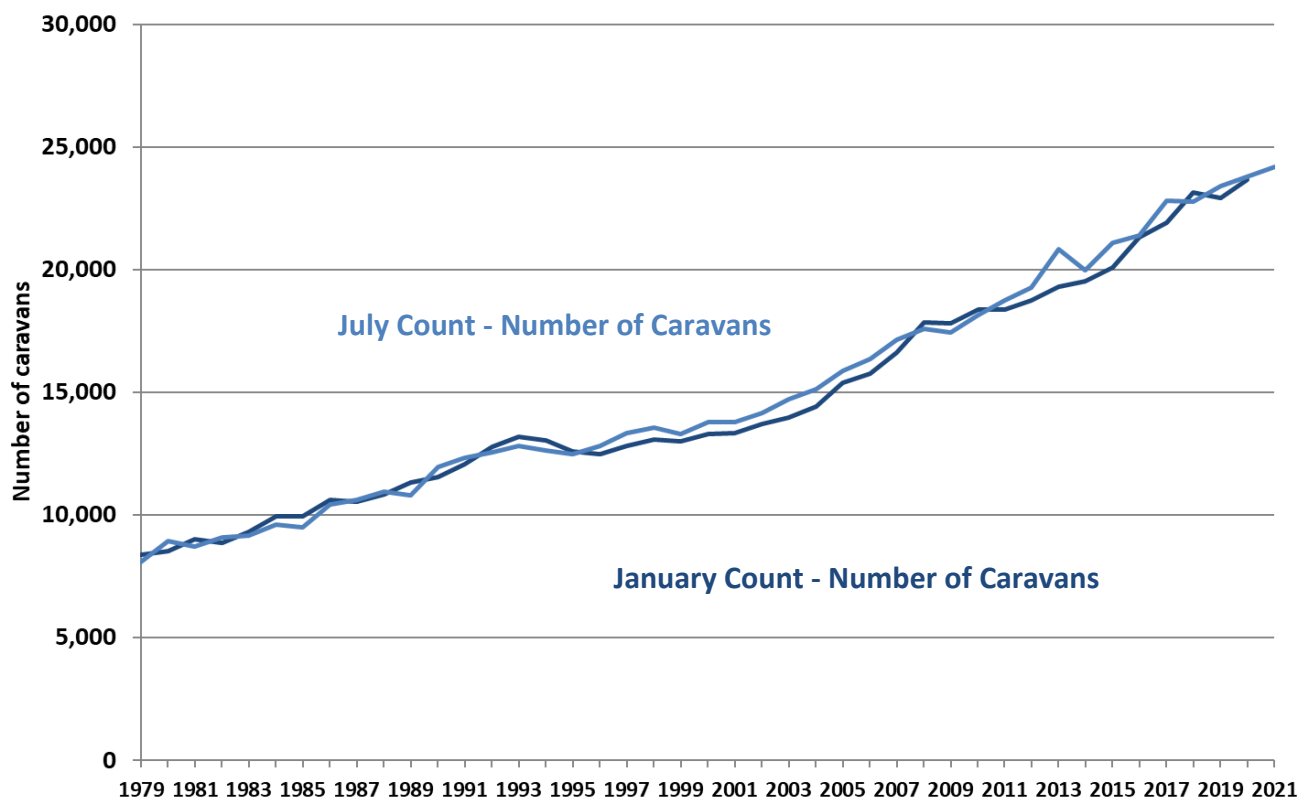
Map 1: Traveller Caravans on Authorised Sites in England, July 2021



Historic data

The traveller caravan count has taken place twice a year since January 1979, with the exception of collections cancelled in July 2020 and January 2021 due to the covid-19 pandemic. Figure 3 below shows how the total number of traveller caravans in England has changed over this period across both summer (July) and winter (January) counts. National totals from each count of the main categories of authorised and unauthorised sites are presented in accompanying Live Table 4. The figures show an increase in the overall total from 8,065 caravans in July 1979 to 24,203 in July 2021.

Figure 3: Number of Traveller Caravans from 1979 to 2021, England



New Affordable Residential Pitches

As part of the July count, local authorities are required to submit data on the number of new affordable rental pitches constructed since the previous year's count. The number of new affordable residential pitches in each local authority area in England has been collected since July 2011 (whilst the July 2020 count was cancelled, information on new affordable residential pitches was still collected from local authorities). This has been reported to allow such pitches to be included in the calculation of the New Homes Bonus for individual local authorities.

Table 2 below shows that, altogether, local authorities reported that two such pitches on socially rented sites and zero such pitches on privately-funded sites had been created between July 2020 and July 2021. Further details are provided in accompanying Live Table 5.

The next count of new affordable residential pitches is expected to take place as part of the July 2022 count of traveller caravans.

Table 2: Count of Traveller Caravans: new affordable residential pitches constructed between July 2011 and July 2021

Year (July count)	Number of new affordable residential pitches¹ On socially-rented traveller sites with planning permission	Number of new affordable residential pitches¹ On privately-funded traveller sites with either temporary or permanent planning permission	Total
2011	44	3	47
2012	96	88	184
2013	35	22	57
2014	49	0	49
2015	162	22	184
2016	27	26	53
2017	41	35	76
2018	44	0	44
2019	57	3	60
2020²	0	15	15
2021	2	0	2

1. Policy guidance notes require these pitches to be new affordable residential pitches that met the 'affordable housing' definition in the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Note that the July 2020 count was cancelled due to the covid-19 pandemic, however data was still collected on new affordable residential pitches.

Accompanying tables and open data

Symbols used

* Imputed

.. No data supplied for at least the previous three counts

Tables

Accompanying tables are available to download alongside this release. These tables can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/traveller-caravan-count-july-2021>

These are:

- Table 1** Count of traveller caravans on authorised and unauthorised sites for the last six counts, nationally and by local authority area, based on local authority boundaries as at the time of the count(s).
- Table 2** Location and size of traveller sites operated by local authorities and private registered providers in England
- Table 3a and b** Number of Travelling Showpeople caravans on authorised and unauthorised sites for the January 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 counts nationally and by local authority area (updated as part of the January count)
- Table 4** National totals for the main categories of authorised and unauthorised sites for all counts since January 1979
- Table 5** Count of Traveller Caravans: new affordable residential pitches constructed between July 2020 and July 2021 (updated as part of the July count)

Statistical releases and accompanying tables for previous caravan counts are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traveller-caravan-count>

Technical Notes

Please see the accompanying technical notes document for further details. This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/traveller-caravan-count-july-2021> .

Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>

Information about statistics at DLUHC is available via the Department's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-levelling-up-housing-and-communities/about/statistics>



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